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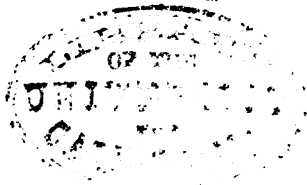


THE  
YOUNG MAN ADVISED:

OR,

ILLUSTRATIONS AND CONFIRMATIONS OF SOME OF THE  
CHIEF HISTORICAL FACTS OF THE BIBLE.

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## Preface.

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EVERY age demands its own books—every age of the world, every age of an individual man. This book was written for the present age of the world, and for the young. There are old treatises on the Bible without number, of every class, profound and light, dull and even witty; but very many of them, from the style both of language and of thought, are not exactly fitted to the present time, and therefore are found chiefly, periodically dusted, in the libraries of antiquarians and of theologians, who, for personal conviction, do not need them.

There is an age of curiosity in man, an age of independence and buoyancy, when, in the case of the religiously-educated, traditional faith is weakened, even the good example of a pious parent is feeble, and childhood's habits of devo-

tion loosen their grasp; and in the case of those who unfortunately have not received an early religious training, there is an increased disinclination to admit the restraints of a sound faith in the Bible.

Now if, just at that time, a youth is plied with all the dangerous arts of scepticism, if he finds in books and newspapers, and hears in lectures and conversation, a thousand aslant and insinuating sneers against the creed of the Christian, he occupies perhaps the most perilous position in the whole of life's pathway: he is near a crisis—a few months may decide his temporal and eternal destiny.

Happy is he, if then some kind and judicious and strong friend stands ready to offer the counsels of maturity, sweetened and tempered by sympathy! Happy he, if a book falls in his way that shall give a right direction to the thoughts of his heart!

Now precisely such is the condition, such the demands of the young in these our times. It is for such that this book is now committed to the press.

Will any young reader, who, perchance, has read thus far, not yet throw aside the volume, but "see the preface through?"

The book consists of successive chapters, in which the greatest leading *facts* of the Bible are presented and confirmed by other evidence, historical and philosophical, with a design to show the superhuman, the divine origin of what we call "The Word of God." Not *all* the facts are thus treated, otherwise this book would have been a huge quarto, or folio, or series of folios, and of course had proportionately few readers; for, with few exceptions, it is a fact that the larger the book the fewer the readers. The writer has tried to practice the art of stopping when he has finished, and of leaving something to be said, and more to be thought, by posterity. One of his greatest difficulties has been, to make the book *small* enough.

The reader will find here no unfair and intentionally sophistical method of reasoning. It is an old maxim, "All is fair in war;" and many Christian authors even seem to write on the principle that "the end justifies the means," and do not hesitate to advance what is feeble and irrelevant and false to sustain a true position. If some writers do not act on this principle, they certainly are incapable of distinguishing between what is feeble and what is strong; what is true as evidence, and what is false.

In this book you will find nothing which the author does not himself believe; and every fact stated, and every quotation made, and every authority referred to, is, according to the author's best information, strictly correct.

The chapter upon Creation does not afford a fair specimen of the book, because, except in reference to the mere *act* of creation, the subject does not admit of the kind of evidence which it is the object of the book to adduce.

With this salutation, the book is before you. If you choose to admit it to your home, your parlour, or study, or work-shop, or family circle, remember it comes not as a principal, but an agent; its sole business is to recommend another, even the Book of books. Perhaps it has blunt honesty, and energy, and persuasiveness enough about it, if you treat it respectfully, to increase your reverence for its Master, the Bible; if so, certainly the author will have nothing to regret, and the reader no complaint to make.

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THE

# YOUNG MAN ADVISED.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE CREATION OF THE WORLD AS DESCRIBED BY MOSES.

THE first subject presented in the Bible is one of the most incomprehensible, and consequently it is one upon which much has been written, and much dogmatism exhibited; for on no subjects are men so presumptuous, and intolerant toward difference of opinion, as upon those which cannot be brought to the test of actual experience. Humility and a confession of human ignorance are certainly graceful when considering the subject of creation.

Has there ever been a creation? This is the first question answered in the Bible. Without a revelation it would be impossible for man to *prove* either the negative or affirmative; yet

I believe that the great preponderance of evidence, aside from revelation, is in favour of the affirmative ; and as it is the object of this book to exhibit the confirmatory evidence of the *facts* related in the Bible, this chapter will present the confirmations, first, of the fact of creation, and then of its order, as described in the first chapter of Genesis.

By the term creation is meant the actual making of a substance that did not exist in any form before. This idea is commonly expressed by the words *created out of nothing*. The power of creation must have existed in the Creator ; whether or not the substance of the thing created was in any sense existent in him, the Bible does not answer, and it may not be wise for us to urge.

Was there ever a creation ? The Greek philosophers replied, generally, No. Their views, discordant as they were upon other particulars, were unanimous upon this. They universally received the thought expressed by the Latin maxim, "*ex nihilo nihil fit*,"\* as an axiom. While, however, their views harmonized upon this general principle, their opinions

\* Out of nothing, nothing comes ; or no thing can be made out of nothing.

upon the organization of the world were very various. Some fancied that the world, as a system, in its present state, had no beginning; but nearly all believed that, though the substance of matter was eternal, the world, as such, had a beginning. The same view has been entertained by some professed Christians.

The various fancies of the ancient philosophers of Greece upon the origin of things, all were based upon the assumption of the eternity of some substance, apart from the Deity. Thus Thales considered water the primordial element; Anaximenes, the air; Pythagoras, fire and harmony; Empedocles, earth, air, fire, and water; and the later philosophers, both Greek and Roman, did little else than refine upon these conceptions. Earlier writers had far more Scriptural views, as we shall soon show.

The conflicting opinions of philosophers upon this point demonstrate one fact, namely, that the human reason is incompetent to decide the question. If answered at all, it must be by revelation. It certainly would be absurd to argue that creation is impossible to God. The old maxim, "Out of nothing nothing comes," is a pure assumption; and instead of being a primary truth, is merely a result of defective,

inductive reasoning. Philosophers have never seen matter created, therefore they conclude it cannot be done,—a most hasty conclusion, since it would not be demanded but once, and must be entirely beyond the grasp of human observation.

On the other hand, some have attempted to show, from reason, that matter cannot be eternal. The most favourite arguments upon this side of the question have been as follows:—

The present material universe is unstable, and bears within itself—unless it be continually supported by a power from without—the elements of destruction. Thus it has been attempted to show that the resistance of the medium of light alone, to the planets, must inevitably destroy the solar system.\* Now, whatever must be destroyed cannot be eternal.

The fallacy in this argument is, that it does not reach the question. If it proves anything, it is simply that the solar system is not eternal, but has no bearing upon the existence of the matter out of which the planets are made.

It has been urged, also, that present material existences are compound; but compounds presuppose the creation of elements. Sharon

\* Edinburgh Review, October, 1831.

Turner gives a homely illustration of this view:\* "The school-boy perceives at once that his plum-cake cannot have been eternal. The plums, the flour, the butter, the eggs, and the sugar, of which it is composed, must have been in some other places and states before they were brought together to make the substance which gratifies him." We grant this, but it does not prove the creation of the materials of which the cake was made.

All physical and metaphysical arguments to prove either a creation or the eternity of matter are failures. There is no other safe ground to take than this—human reason can throw no light upon the question of creation. It is utterly and forever beyond the reach of a finite mind.

We must examine the Bible to ascertain whether its *other teachings*, within the reach of human reason, are confirmed; and whether it bears satisfactory evidence of being the word of God. If so, what it teaches upon the subject of creation we are to receive with docility, thankful that God has answered a problem that our reason could not solve.

But there is satisfactory evidence that *man* was created. Indeed he must have been created.

\* Sacred History of the World.



The idea of an infinite series of generations without a beginning is a simple absurdity. It is like an attempt to support a chain by itself, fastened only at one end. Of an infinite series of links, the last link *but one* certainly had a beginning. The next, or the first, must either have a beginning or not. If it has, the question is answered—there was a creation. If the last link had no beginning, then it is infinitely long—longer than all the rest beside, which is an absurdity. There must have been a first man, or a first generation of men. Either they had a beginning, or they were eternal, and consequently not men. The terms eternal creation and eternal generation are unintelligible and absurd. The originator of human existence was God.

There is abundant evidence that the race of men has not existed more than the period allotted to them in the Bible,—not far from six thousand years. The evidence of this is as satisfactory as of the facts, that the Declaration of the Independence of the United States was adopted July 4th, 1776; that Alfred was king of England in the ninth century of our Lord; that Socrates taught philosophy in ancient Greece; that Babylon was a populous city three thousand years

ago; and that Egypt was a flourishing nation two thousand years before Christ.

Indeed, the evidence of all these assertions is precisely of the same nature,—historical testimony confirmed by existing facts, and not to be denied without absurdities; showing in him who persists in a denial a weakness of reason and incompetency of judgment, which must be pronounced either stupidity or insanity.\*

There is no authentic history of man, extending more than about three thousand years before Christ, except what is found in the Bible; and the scanty records of that early age show that then the human family was young and few, all of which confirms the Scriptural account of the creation. Indeed, that the human family had a beginning, and that, too, when and where the Bible places it, we believe confirmed by as satisfactory historical evidence as any reasonable person could demand. This point will recur in an examination of the doctrine of the Deluge.

\* We would here remark, that in these pages the chronology of the Septuagint is received as the most reasonable and correct. Satisfactory reasons for this may be found in Smith's Patriarchal Age, and in the works of all historians who have accurately investigated the early history of Assyria, India, Egypt, and China. This system of chronology alone introduces harmony, where, according to Usher's computations, all is confusion, and discord, and even absurdity.

But while it may be considered a moral demonstration that the race of man began its existence at the date designated by the Bible, yet no Scriptural subject has been more severely criticised and warmly opposed than the *order of creation*, as described in the first chapter of Genesis. - Volumes have been written upon it; philology, natural science, metaphysics, and the imagination have been tasked to their utmost capability to solve the riddle, and to show just how the world was created, and just how the order, as described in Genesis, can be made to correspond with the traces of its own creation, supposed to exist in the earth itself and its inhabitants.

Now, manifestly, it would not accord with the plan of this book to adopt any one of the numerous recondite theories which Biblical geologists have invented to solve this mystery. We do not propose to write a commentary on the *whole Bible*, but only to select those grand incidents recorded in the sacred Scriptures which *are* strikingly confirmed by parallel history and by philosophy, and to present those confirmations. If there be mysteries yet unsolved, or facts related which never can be verified except by the general truthfulness of

the whole, we ought to be willing to acknowledge it. We therefore boldly assume this position in the outset,—that if the first chapter of Genesis is an insoluble enigma, if indeed the appearances of the earth's texture cannot be made by human ingenuity to harmonize with it, or that to harmonize with the appearances; still, so strikingly is the Bible *in general* confirmed by history, by testimony, by its adaptation to man, and by its effects, that it demands the assent of every rational man, and must and will have it in spite of that and even other enigmas.

Men seem to forget that the creation of the world has occurred *but once*; that it cannot be tested by human observation; that we have but one account of it purporting to be revealed from heaven, and that exceedingly brief, written in a language long since given up as a spoken language; and that all men ought to be willing to acknowledge their great liability to error, when they attempt to fill out from human fancy the brief outline thus presented. That outline is, however, amply sufficient to accomplish the purpose for which it was given,—to show that the LORD GOD created the universe, and is the SUPREME ONE worthy of the homage of all mankind.

Indeed, we would not write a line upon this subject, did we not fear that some might suppose that we deemed the Scriptural account utterly indefensible if we passed it by in silence; since it is not our object to theorize, but to present acknowledged facts.

It is asserted by geologists that the earth bears in itself indisputable evidence of an antiquity utterly incalculable, and far more than ten thousand or than ten million of years. This many profound believers in the inspiration of Moses also believe; and, moreover, assert that there is no want of harmony between that view and the historical account given in the first chapter of Genesis. These commentators may be divided into three classes.

The first class affirm that between the time specified in the first verse, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," and the time specified in the second verse, subsequently termed the *first day*, an indefinite period elapsed, during which the earth underwent all those changes traced out by geologists. This class believe that the first chapter of Genesis, subsequent to the first verse, describes not a primitive creation, but only a new creation, or a special arrangement of the long previously

created earth, for the especial accommodation of man.

The second class of commentators, allowing the indefinite antiquity of the earth, maintain that the term translated "day," throughout this chapter, means an undetermined period of time; and that "evening and morning" simply denote the beginning and close of this long period. Profound philological arguments have been adduced, and numerous parallel instances of such a use of language, to confirm this hypothesis. And it has been shown that some Jewish and Christian commentators entertained this view before any geological theories were invented.

The third class of these commentators adopt both of the above views, and thus arrive at the same practical result.

It is not becoming in any man, at least without equal scientific attainments and research, to pronounce those views altogether fanciful or absurd, entertained as they have been by some of the ripest scholars, and most intelligent men, and most faithful Christians, in this or any other age. And it is worthy of notice that these geologists claim to have ascertained, according to their own theories, that *man* cannot have been on the earth longer than the Bible allows,

and that their researches do in this respect perfectly harmonize with the Scriptural history.\*

There are, however, commentators who adhere rigidly to the most literal construction of the language of this chapter, according to its ordinary and popular signification. These commentators may be divided into two classes.

Class first are those who utterly pass by and condemn all geological theory and study whatever, not allowing it even a place in the controversy. Happily this class is small, and daily becoming smaller, if not in numbers, at least in influence. Truth is one, and can never contradict itself. We view truth in fragments; if they do not coincide, let us not throw away the smallest portion, but seek the connecting parts.

The second class are those who profess to examine patiently and thoroughly all the facts and teachings of geology; and yet insist that time enough has elapsed since the Mosaic date of creation, according to the literal sense of the language, for all the phenomena, evidence of which is found in the texture of the surface-

\* This is disputed by some, but on very unsatisfactory evidence.

strata of the globe. This class acknowledge all the facts of geology, not blinking one of them, and profess to believe that the *theories* of modern geologists are untenable and hypothetical, and mutually contradictory, and even uncalled-for; and that geologists have in fact made the mistake, common among the ancient philosophers, of constructing theories too rashly, and without due deference to a general survey of facts; while it is the part of a true philosophy to gather facts first, and at least partially hold the mind in suspense till the observations have become mature and abundant. Many, moreover, maintain that, according to principles allowed by the most eminent geologists, all the changes known to have taken place in the earth's substance may have occurred as easily in four thousand as in four millions of years, and that some of the observations seem to verify this view rather than the other.

Now we have a definite opinion upon this subject, but we do not wish in this volume to express it. Sufficient, we think, has been written to show that there is nothing in the first chapter of Genesis known to be false. If we do not adduce it as confirmed by observation and history, that does not weaken the *other confirmations*\*



which we shall proceed to present. Certainly if the great majority of the facts affirmed in the Scriptures are attested, and the others cannot be proved *unreasonable*, it is not too much to ask that *they* be received upon the authority of the others.

No description of a process of creation could be imagined to which the fertile fancy of man could not object, since observation could not confirm it, and from the nature of the case it must be miraculous and stand alone in history; and it is only "by *faith*" that "we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."

One fact strikes our attention in the examination of this chapter, and it is one often suggested when reading the Bible; and that is, the utter recklessness exhibited by the writers of any attempt to make their descriptions command belief by any appeal to popular sentiment, or to what many would call common sense. They often use expressions which show a complete want of that art which a writer employs who desires his representations to appear truthful; and it can only be accounted for by the fact that they were under the guidance of a higher power, who compelled

them to write the truth, however unlike the truth some of their representations might appear. A good illustration of this may be seen in the evangelists, who relate some of the same facts in their Four Gospels with such a difference of phraseology and of circumstances, that they seem at first utterly irreconcilable, thus showing that they made no effort to make them mutually consistent. But we find that by bringing them together, and supplying omissions each from the other, they harmonize, and their very appearance of contradiction confirms the whole.

Similar is the effect of collating the work of the fourth day of creation with that of the preceding days. We are informed that light was created on the first day, and there were three successive evenings, and mornings, and days,—and then God said, “Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and for years.” And then we are told that “God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night.” The simplest critic, even a child, would exclaim, How is this? The sun made after there had been already three days! What caused the previous days and

nights? And many a *childish* critic has made the narrative the butt of ridicule. Upon this we would simply inquire, Had not Moses common sense? Can it be supposed that the writer of this sublime chapter, if left to himself, would not have seen this apparent inconsistency, which the most superficial reader now detects? We believe that Moses would not have thus written without a reason; and that reason, we believe, was because it was a fact. The event described as occurring on the fourth day did then occur, just as it is written, though perhaps Moses at the time did not himself understand it.

The explanations suggested have been various, according to the exposition of the chapter adopted. Those who suppose that during the six days the earth was not *created*, but reconstructed and fitted for the abode of man, believe that on the fourth day the mists and darkness which had previously enshrouded the earth were dispelled; and that the command, "Let there be light," is equivalent to, Let the lights appear, and commence their office-work of regulating the seasons and the years. But those who adhere to the literal interpretation of the language maintain, that though the sun and moon and the stars of this

great family\* were previously in existence, yet on the fourth day the *position of the earth's axis was adjusted in its present inclination*, and the proper motions given to the heavenly bodies and the earth, by which the sun and moon were first *appointed* for signs and seasons. This would, indeed, be a work sublime enough to occupy one of the days of creation.

Modern natural philosophers have observed the correctness of the phraseology of Moses in speaking of light as distinct from the sun. Light was the first thing created—

“Offspring of heaven, first-born;”

but the sun did not appear at least till the fourth day. For thousands of years men believed that the sun was the great source of light; but it is now shown that light, and heat, and electricity, and magnetism are but different movements in a substance or elastic medium that pervades all material things, and perhaps all space; and it is by no means unphilosophical to speak of *light*

\* The revelations of the telescope prove that there are separate families or systems of stars, mutually acting upon each other, and connected together; and that between these immense clusters of stars are large, vacant places in space, in which no material existence can be detected. What is called the “Milky Way,” with all the larger stars, constitutes the cluster to which our world belongs.

as created apart from the sun. How could Moses have understood this? And yet now how consistent his representation appears!

We leave this subject, then, with this observation, that probably the first act of God, connected with this earth, will be the last understood by man. We are not competent to criticise the Almighty's method of creating; but so far as we can understand the nature of material things, when closely examined, it confirms the Mosaic account.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE DELUGE.

THE moral lessons of the Deluge are what should give it the greatest interest, and these alone gave its history a claim to a place in the word of God. But the stupendousness of the event as a natural phenomenon, its assumed violation of the laws which ordinarily govern material things, and its apparent impossibility, have diverted many minds from its deep religious teachings to learned disquisitions upon the ocean, the land, rain, and all the particulars of the science of meteorology. Gladly would we confine our attention to the strictly religious aspects of the subject; but the object which we have proposed compels us to consider the theme in the light of evidence, and to show that the account of it in Scripture is a truthful record of the miraculous acts of our Creator.

Our first effort should be to obtain as clear and as accurate views as possible of the event. It has been so often fancifully and eloquently

described, that very many additional particulars have been foisted in upon the Biblical narrative, and perhaps multitudes owe more of their conceptions of the deluge to the fertile fancy of men than to its only truthful history. When we are really ignorant, it is wise to acknowledge it; and we protest against the right of any uninspired man to append any particulars to the original narrative of this event.

Let us first consider the probable number of human beings living when the flood came on the earth. Upon this subject the fancy of commentators has performed wondrous exploits, and we have been bidden to look upon a world teeming with population, covered with cities, its rivers and oceans checkered with the sails of commerce, its valleys and hill-sides cultivated—all submerged by the rising waters, and swept into one common grave. But what are the facts upon which this immense superstructure is built? Simply these:—

1. The antediluvian history extended over sixteen hundred and fifty-six years; or, according to the Septuagint, twenty-two hundred and sixty-two years.

2. God had said to man, Be fruitful, multiply, and replenish the earth.

3. Cain is said to have built a city. Gen. iv, 17.

4. The patriarchs successively mentioned are said to have had sons and daughters.

Beyond these simple statements there are no facts mentioned bearing upon the populousness of the earth ; and truly they are a very slight basis for such a towering edifice. Let us examine them in order.

The antediluvian history was about two thousand years, and God had said unto man, "Be fruitful." True, but it by no means follows that we have a right to transfer to that time and that world the rates of increase in population that have been observed in the most favoured countries in the postdiluvian world. We travel quite beyond the record in so doing. Nothing is more evident than that the condition of man and the nature of man were vastly different then from the present. One thing must strike every observer, that Noah was in the tenth generation only from Adam, and that there had been, therefore, actually only ten generations in human history. Again, it is observable that the average age of the persons mentioned, at the birth of their eldest son, was about one hundred and sixty, or, according to the Septuagint, two hundred and sixty years ; and that we have no



intimation that the families of men were larger then than in postdiluvian times ; and that death then must have interfered with the increase of population as well as now. From all that I can gather from the history, I conclude that we have no just reason to conjecture that the population of the antediluvian world was greater at the end of 1656, or, according to the Septuagint, 2262 years from Adam, than the lineal descendants of one family, kept by itself, would be now, under ordinary circumstances, at the end of ten generations, or in about three hundred years. Allowing that the population should double eleven times, which is a liberal estimate, the number of human beings on the earth at the time of the deluge could not have been more than six thousand, less than three thousand of whom would have been in the last generation ; and the whole number would constitute only a respectable settlement.

With reference to the statement that Cain built a city, certainly it affords no intimation that he himself founded a metropolis, like the present great cities of the earth. That he formed a settlement by himself is all we have any right to infer ; living in comparative seclusion, but gathering about him a few friends.

The opinion that the population of the world was, as we might naturally expect, for the first thousand years very small, though constantly increasing, and thus preparing soon for a very rapid increase, is confirmed by the opening of the sixth chapter of Genesis: "And it came to pass, when *men began to multiply* on the face of the earth." What is the meaning of that phrase, "men began to multiply?" Every one who has made the arithmetical calculation of a regular increase, by the constant doubling of a number, has observed that for a certain time the increase appears trivial; but that after it has reached a certain progress, the advancement becomes exceedingly rapid. Thus, allowing that the population doubles in what is called one generation, which in postdiluvian times is far more rapid than the average, at the end of one hundred and sixty years from the creation there would have been four human beings on the earth; at the year 320 there would have been eight; at the year 480 there would have been sixteen; and at 960 there would have been thirty-two. But by the time you reached the year of the world 1440 the whole population might be over a thousand; and now the increase would begin to be very rapid.

Now, in the beginning of the sixth chapter, we read that "men *began to multiply*;" and when God saw that this multiplication would be a curse, because the little body of human beings were exceedingly sinful, and, so to speak, the human family had *started* wrong, he said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years." Now this is universally understood to mean that God then revealed to Noah, and perhaps to others, that man, being flesh or mortal, should not live on the earth more than one hundred and twenty years from the time when that decision was made: and before that one hundred and twenty years was past the ark must be prepared. And, consequently, we infer that so small was the human family, that they could not, in ordinary language, be said to have *begun to multiply* till one hundred and twenty years before the flood came.

Now just for a moment suppose, as many commentators most preposterously assert, that the population of the world, one hundred and twenty years before the deluge, amounted to one thousand millions, how could they be said just then to have *begun to multiply*? *Begun to*

*multiply*, when their numbers already surpassed the present population of the world! According to that view, the human family has but just now "begun to multiply" since the deluge!

We would not so strongly insist upon this view, opposed as we know to the general sentiment, did we not firmly believe it to be correct, and did we not believe, too, that it relieves the subject from much difficulty and darkness. How, on the supposition that the world was immensely populous then, could Noah have warned them all of a coming deluge in one hundred and twenty years? But we read of no other one commissioned to do this work. And how preposterous it would have been to warn a whole world, teeming with population, of a coming flood; and that the only provision against it was the building of one ark, in a northern country of Central Asia.

It would require more than one hundred and twenty years even for twelve apostles to travel over the whole earth, and, by any imaginable system of conveying information, allow twelve hundred millions of people to hear only once the startling announcement. We have had hundreds of missionaries for the past one hundred and twenty years, but they have not yet

succeeded in preaching the gospel, nor, even by aid of the printing-press, in giving one Bible to every man, woman, and child in the world.

All those highly-wrought pictures, to which you have often perhaps listened, of a world of millions overtaken by a flood of waters, are simply figments of the imagination,—like many representations of Scripture scenes on canvass, very sublime and creditable to the artists, but verily not worthy of a place in sober history. This is not the only instance in which we shall find it very profitable to search the Scriptures ourselves, and not accept for truth the fancyings of men.

I look upon the deluge as the next great event after the creation, taking place in the infancy of the world; and though some two thousand years had passed away according to the method of reckoning time employed for its estimation, whatever it was, yet the human race must have been very scanty, as it was only one hundred and twenty years after God saw that “men began to multiply” on the face of the earth.

The supposition that a single woman would become the mother of three or four hundred children successively is preposterous in the abstract, unparalleled in nature, and not supported

by a single sentence of tradition, profane or Scriptural; and yet such is the supposition of all who maintain that the earth was thickly populated before the deluge.

Having thus considered the probable population of the world at that time, the next point of interest is the extent of the deluge. And here, too, we are met with a mass of theories and descriptions that would appal us by their multitude and contradictions, were we not assured that they are human fancies, wholly unfounded in the Scriptural narrative.

It has been taken for granted by many that the surface of the earth was then similar to the present; that the two great continents now existing, and all the islands, were then in existence, with the present great mountain ranges; and that all were immersed, to the very summit of the Alps, the Andes, and the Himalayas; and careful calculations have been instituted upon the amount of water requisite to enlarge the globe of the earth out to these summits on all sides. Various fancied sources of these waters have been invented, some looking to the bowels of the earth, some to a foreign body in space, some supposing that it was miraculously created at the time, and afterward annihilated, and some

that it was liberated from various solid bodies that held it imprisoned, and afterward absorbed; while no reasonable explanation of the supposition can be given that it should rain upon all sides of the earth at once, a phenomenon perfectly contradictory to the ordinary laws of nature.

Others have supposed that the configuration of the continents was then entirely destroyed, the dry land previous to the deluge being where the ocean is now, and the ocean previously occupying the place of the present land; and that the bed of the ocean was raised into continents, and the old continents depressed into seas. No glimpse of such tremendous phenomena, however, is given in the sacred record.

Now a law of universal application may be inferred from the acts of God, namely, that he never exhibits a superfluity of power, never resorts to a miracle where ordinary laws of nature will bring about his design, and never displays a miracle more stupendous than sufficient to accomplish the intended purpose.

If, then, our views upon the populousness of the world at that time are correct, no such extravagant theories are necessary. The object of the flood is clearly stated to have been to

sweep off the wicked race of men *universally*. But if that race were few in numbers, and confined to a small section of the earth, then a deluge covering that entire section of earth, and sweeping away the entire world of men, would be universal to them; and any excess of water above that requisite amount would have been superfluous, and therefore contrary to the general plan according to which the Almighty always acts. Nor is it a valid objection to this view that terms expressive of universality are employed in the brief description of the deluge. The deluge was universal if it destroyed all of mankind,—and “everything under the whole heaven” perished. Language must always be interpreted according to the general view given in the context, or whole description of which it forms a part; and especially the language in the historical parts of the Bible, where it is always employed in what may be called a popular sense, and not with that accuracy sought in scientific and legal writings.

In Genesis xli, 56, we read, “And the famine was over all the face of the earth.” Could a more general term be employed than this, “over all the face of the earth?”

But who supposes that this ~~is to be~~ literally



understood,—that there was famine in all parts of Europe, and of Africa, and of America,—if America then existed,—as well as in the parts of Asia immediately described? “All the face of the earth” evidently means there,—that part of the earth in which Jacob and his sons dwelt, and the regions about Egypt.

In Deuteronomy ii, 25, we read this expression: “This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon *the nations that are under the whole heaven*, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee.” This was the word of the Lord to Moses, when he was about to attack the Canaanites; but who supposes that, literally, that attack would excite terror in the minds of *all nations*, or “the nations under the whole heaven?” Did it terrify the Hindoos and Chinese, and other nations then existing, who have never heard of it even to this day? Who does not perceive that “the nations that are under the whole heaven,” is a phrase used to denote the very general consternation that would be excited among all the Canaanites and other people immediately concerned?

Nor is such a use of language confined to the Old Testament. In Luke ii, 1, we read, “And

it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed." Certainly all the world in this decree could mean only the whole Roman empire, which was less than half the world, while, in fact, it seems only to have meant Palestine.

In Acts ii, 5, it is said, "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, *out of every nation under heaven,*" which, of course, simply means from many nations; perhaps from all the nations with which the Jews were then conversant.

It is unnecessary to multiply instances upon so plain a point. The terms of universality employed in the description of the deluge, without doing violence to any rule, and in strict accordance with the ordinary method of interpreting language, may be supposed to signify all the world then inhabited by the descendants of Adam. A deluge destroying them was to man, strictly speaking, a universal deluge. The most universal terms were not improper, since it was the total destruction of all men; and so far as they could see, or had even conjectured, "under the whole heaven."

But, it may be asked, Why was Noah com-

manded to take into the ark with him animals of various kinds, if the deluge was not strictly universal? We reply, There were probably then, as now, many animals domesticated and supported by man, and these, too, the most valuable for man, living nowhere else; besides various other species that may not have wandered far from what seems to have been the birth-place of men, and of the most, if not of all animals, which would have been exterminated by the deluge but for this provision. These Noah was commanded to save. This view seems to us plausible and natural, and at the same time completely to remove the strongest objections to the more common view, growing out of the immense number of species, and the apparent mathematical impossibility of crowding them into a vessel of the given dimensions of the ark.\*

Again, the earth's surface bears marks of repeated local deluges, which are brought about by the regular action of the laws of nature, any one of which would have been amply sufficient to sweep away an entire race equal to that inhabiting the antediluvian world.

\* The number of distinct species of animals incapable of mixing, breathing only in the air, is at least five thousand. (See Agassiz and Gould's *Zoology*, p. 3.)

Do any object that this view seems to strip the account of its miraculous character? I answer, We are bound to understand all Scriptural narratives in the simplest manner possible; and this event was truly miraculous, in its *time*, in its *purpose*, in the *prophetic* revelation of it given to Noah, and in its *stupendous effects*, sweeping, as it did, the world of its guilty progeny, and preparing the earth for a new commencement of human history; after which the nature of man was surprisingly changed, his term of life greatly diminished, and the temptations to sin, and the severity of man's trial, probably, greatly lessened.

Such is the view of the deluge which we are compelled to take; if others entertain different views, we cannot object to it; but these views have not been selected by us to accommodate any particular theory, but are forced upon our minds by a careful examination of the Bible itself.

Having determined what the deluge was, and what was its object, it is our purpose now to inquire into the evidence of this historical fact now existing among men, apart from the sacred record. This evidence we shall find abundant

and satisfactory, and such as to force conviction upon every candid mind.

Observe the many obstacles standing in the way of a clear traditional account of this event. Letters were not invented, perhaps, till centuries after the deluge: they certainly were not in common use for many hundred years; and all history that was preserved was transmitted by word of mouth. When writing was first employed, the deluge was a subject of no more immediate interest than it is now. Those who then lived had not seen its waves. Still, the tremendousness of the event did preserve it in the minds of men till language was written; and one of the earliest efforts of writing was to make an imperishable record of this history.

The Assyrians had a very exact account of the deluge,\* in which they state that the tenth man in descent from the first was saved in an ark, which rested finally at Armenia. Berosus preserves the name Noah, and of his sons Shem, Ham, and Japhet.

The ancient Persians have a similar tradition. Zoroaster is said to have affirmed that the deluge was occasioned by the wickedness of a person

\* Berosus, as quoted by Eusebius, in *Praep. Evangel.*, lib. ix, c. xii.

called Malsus ; and the Persians now pretend to designate a place where the waters gushed from the earth.\* A poem, called Bagavat, written in the language of Hindostan, centuries before Christ, has a similar account. The description of it is strikingly similar to that given by Moses.†

There is also a Chinese tradition to the same effect. "They believe the earth to have been wholly covered with water, flowing abundantly, then subsiding, and separating the higher from the lower age of mankind.‡

The ancient Egyptians do not seem to have overlooked the stupendous fact. Their Osiris, who seems to have been Noah, according to Plutarch, entered an ark on the seventeenth of the month Athyr, corresponding exactly with the Hebrew account.§

The story of Deucalion's deluge is familiar to every classical scholar. Of him, Philo, an Alexandrian Jew, well states: "The Grecians call him Deucalion, but the Chaldeans style him Noah, in whose time the great deluge occurred."

\* Edinburgh Encyc., article, Deluge.

† Asiatic Researches, vol. ii., p. 118. ‡ Ibid., p. 376.

§ See Edinburgh Encyc., article, Deluge ; and Plutarch de Isid. and Osir., p. 356, &c.

Plutarch, a Grecian writer after Christ, mentions a tradition, that Deucalion sent out a dove from the vessel, to explore the waste of waters.

It is very remarkable that many nations that have been shut off, till lately, from intercourse with others from time immemorial, have preserved such traditions. The natives of the Sandwich Islands, and the New-Zealanders, both, when visited, had such traditions. The Peruvians, Mexicans, and North American Indians had similar traditions.

It has been attempted to account for these traditions by supposing many local deluges in ancient times; but this is very unphilosophical, begging the question, and multiplying difficulties. No candid mind can resist the influence of these traditions, nor deny that on the supposition of a universal deluge, like that described in the Bible, in the infancy of the world, these distorted and yet agreeing traditions are what might have been anticipated. We do not adduce them as a demonstration, but as valuable subsidiary evidence.

Still other evidence of the universal deluge is extant. A remembrance of it is perpetuated in the most ancient systems of heathen worship. These systems of idolatry were of gradual growth,

and many of them had originally some historical basis. Any other supposition is not only gratuitous, but absurd. Those who have studied the gradual encroachment of idolatry upon Christianity, in the history of the Romish Church, are at no loss to account for heathen idolatry.

Now it is a striking fact that *an ark* has been held in great veneration in some of the most wide-spread systems of worship. This was true in the worship of Osiris in Egypt, of Adonis in various countries, of Bacchus and Ceres in Rome; and, to the astonishment of scholars, this same mysterious veneration of the ark has been detected among the Mexicans, North American Indians, and South Sea islanders.

Is not this strange attesting evidence of the fact, that all men were once under great obligation to the ark?\*

It would seem also that the triads of gods, in various systems of prevalent heathen worship, have arisen from the deification of Noah's three sons, who, confounded with Adam's three sons, came to be looked upon as the three great tute-

\* The critical reader will find this subject elaborated in Bryant's *Ancient Mythology*, a prodigy of diligence and research; and also in Faber's *Dissertation on the Mysteries of the Cabiri*.



lar divinities of men. The one, Cain or Ham, was regarded as an unpropitious or gloomy god. "Hence we have in all pagan mythologies a triad of principal gods. In the Greek, Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto; in the Hindoo, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva; in the Egyptian, Osiris, Horus, and Typhon, one of whom, in each case, is a divinity of a dark nature, like Cain or Ham. The Persians had their Ormuzd, Mithrad, and Ahriman; the Syrians their Merinnus, Azis, and Ares; the Canaanites their Baal-Shelisha, or self-triplicated Baal; the Goths their Odin, Vilo, and Ve, who are described as the three sons of the mysterious cow, a symbol of the ark; the Jakutha Tartars their Artagon, Schugo-ten-gon, and Tanguru—the last, even in name, the Tangu-tangu of the Peruvians: for this singular fact stops not with the great primitive nations; it extends itself to all others, even to those discovered in modern times. Like China and Japan, the Peruvians were found, on the discovery of America, to have their triads, Apem-iti, Churunti, and. Intiquoque, or the father-sun, brother-sun, and son-sun. The Mexicans had also their Mexilli, Haloc, and Tercallipuca, the last the god of repentance. The New-Zealanders believe that three gods made the first

man and the first woman from the man's rib; and their general term for love is Eve. The Otaheitans had a similar idea."\*

Thus traditions and customs combine to confirm this Biblical account. It should never be forgotten that the evidence of the divine origin and the truth of the Bible is cumulative, and consists of almost innumerable parts, all harmoniously cohering. Well has it been said that "the moral certainty of the Mosaic history of the flood is established on a basis sufficiently firm to bid defiance to the cavils of scepticism." It follows from this great fact, that the human family had its second origin where the ark rested, on the mountainous region of Ararat, which was probably Armenia, in Western Asia, perhaps the most beautiful region of the earth.

A German historian† has remarked that there seems to be no better way of determining this, than to seek where wheat, rye, oats, and barley—grains which civilized men have always with them—grow spontaneously; and where the horse, and ox, and other domestic animals, always attendant upon men, run wild: for we may with propriety suppose that the first emigrants car-

\* Howitt's *Priestcraft*, pp. 19, 20.

† Müller's *Universal History*, vol. i, p. 48.

ried with them the vegetables and animals which they had at home, just as emigrants now carry with them the utensils and vegetables of their fatherland. Now barley grows wild behind the Caspian Sea. Other grains there grow spontaneously, and there our household animals roam without owners. There are found, indigenous with the soil, the vine, the olive, rice, legumina, and other plants on which man has depended in all ages for sustenance ; and all of those animals which he has tamed and led with him over the whole earth, there run wild upon the mountains, as the ox, the horse, the ass, the sheep, the goat, the camel, the hog, the dog, the cat, and even the gentle reindeer, which accompanies him to the icy polar tract.

As far as this strange evidence goes, how beautifully and singularly does it authenticate Holy Writ !

The unity of the human race is a fact directly flowing from the doctrine of a universal deluge, and will be considered in a following chapter.

We cannot conclude this chapter without the remark, that if any are not convinced by the above arguments that the great deluge was local, extending only so far as man extended, still all the other facts and reasonings adduced

are applicable. We have no objection to a belief in the positive universality of the deluge, if any choose; to us the Bible itself—and on that alone we depend—does not seem to teach it,—and this, too, is the belief of very many, we think a majority, of learned commentators on the Holy Scriptures.

## CHAPTER III.

EARLY TRADITIONS CONFIRMATORY OF THE  
FIRST CHAPTERS OF GENESIS.

THE traditions of ancient nations cannot be accounted for, or understood, except by the key that is presented in the Book of Genesis. The nations that claim an ancient history are very few, and are confined to Asia and Africa. The Persians, Chinese, Hindus, Tartars, and Assyrians, are the oldest Asiatic nations; and the Egyptians and Ethiopians are the oldest in Africa. There is no people in Europe that ever claimed an antiquity as high as the commonly received date of the deluge, or for whom it was ever claimed; and about the origin of the early inhabitants of America nothing certainly is known.

Some of the most curious traditions of the ancient nations, bearing upon the antediluvian world, are worthy of brief notice. The most ancient heathen writer, any of whose productions are extant, was perhaps Sanchoniathon, who lived in Phœnicia, within the limits of what is

now called Palestine. The precise date of his life is not known, and all of his writings now extant are found as quotations, translated into Greek, in a book entitled, "The Preparation and Defence of the Gospel,"\* by Eusebius, a bishop of Cæsarea, in Palestine, who lived in the fourth century after Christ. How he obtained Sanchoniathon's writings is not known; and as his quotations are introduced without a specification of their nature, or a statement of their authority, they are of but little intrinsic value. It is, however, clear that though this extract is loaded with heathen superstitions, the Mosaic account of the creation, and of the antediluvian world, are confirmed by it.† Historians generally have attributed great value to the few extracts we have from Sanchoniathon, and regard him as a sober historian.

His representation of the creation is, "That the beginning of all things was a dark, condensed wind, turbid and black, and, for a long series of ages, destitute of form." This was chaos. "But finally, through its own love,

\* "*Εὐαγγελικῆς ἀποδείξεως προπαρασκευή*," or "*Præparatio Evangelica*," lib. i, cap. x, and lib. iv, cap. xvii.

† See also Cory's *Ancient Fragments*. London: Pickering. 1832. Page 3, &c., where a literal translation into English is given.

[attraction,] a union was formed, and this was the beginning of the creation of things." "First, animals without sensation were formed: but when the air began to send forth *light*, winds were produced; thunders and lightnings followed; intelligent animals sprung up; and, finally, two men were created, Eon and Protonus; and Eon discovered food from trees. Their descendants were Genus [perhaps Cain] and Genea."

This account is fanciful, but is it a perversion of the truth, or a mere imagination? The reader can judge as well as the learned men who have affected to decide.

Another ancient writer is Berosus, who is said to have been a priest of the worship of Belus, in Babylon, a contemporary of Alexander the Great, and for some years a resident in Athens, Greece. He lived more than half a century after the last Hebrew prophet, whose writings form a part of the Old Testament; and in confirmation of the Mosaic history his account would not be of the slightest worth, did he not pretend to have access to the *ancient books* of the Babylonians, and to draw his information from them.

A fragment of Berosus's writings is preserved by Alexander Polyhistor, who lived in Phrygia, in the second century of our Lord. He was a heathen writer, and celebrated for his varied and abundant learning. According to him, Berosus says, "In the first year [or earliest times] there appeared a superior being, Oannes, who gave the following account of the creation: 'There was a time when nothing existed but darkness and an abyss of waters, wherein existed hideous beings, which were produced of a twofold principle.'" Then follows a lively allegorical picture of chaos. "Finally, Belus [or the Divinity] divided the darkness, and separated the heavens from the earth, and reduced the universe to order." Then follows a fanciful account of the creation of man.

This information Berosus claims to have found written and delineated on the walls of the temple of Belus, in Babylon, of which he was one of the priests.

No traditional view of the creation among the Egyptians, worthy of notice, has been preserved; though it is plainly stated by Jamblichus, a great friend of the apostate emperor



Julian, and the strongest defender of Paganism, in the fourth century after Christ, that the ancient Egyptians believed in one God, the Creator of all things.

Plutarch, a Grecian, who lived in the second century after Christ, says that he read the following inscription in an Egyptian temple: "I AM ALL THAT HAS BEEN, IS, AND EVER SHALL BE;" which strongly reminds us of the fourteenth verse of the third chapter of Exodus: "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."

• That the earliest Egyptians believed in one God, the Creator, is affirmed by modern investigators of their monuments and writings. They believed also in the immortality of the soul, in a resurrection of the body, and in future rewards and punishments.\*

That the ancient Hindoos had a clear tradition of the creation, corresponding in its general features with the statement in Genesis, though mixed up with many strange conceits, is unanimously asserted by all who have investigated

\* See Egypt: her Monuments, Hieroglyphics, &c. By George R. Gliddon, late United States Consul at Cairo. Philadelphia: T. B. Peterson. 1844.

their strange books. Sir William Jones, the celebrated linguist, and founder of the Asiatic Society for inquiring into the histories and antiquities of that continent, has given this testimony, which is corroborated by others.

It would be of but little advantage to examine the exceedingly scanty and unsatisfactory fragments of the earliest writings of the Chinese, Persians, Scythians, and others; but we should find in all traces—dim though they are—of a belief in the creation of this world, from nothing, by the Almighty God.

In the *Manava Sastra*, or Institutes of Menu, a work of great authority and remote antiquity among the Hindoos, the origin of the universe is thus unfolded: "It existed only in the first divine idea, yet unexpanded, as if involved in darkness, imperceptible, undefinable, undiscoverable by reason, and undiscovered by revelation, as if it were wholly immersed in sleep. Then the sole, self-existing power, who had existed from eternity, shone forth in person, expanding his idea, and dispelling the gloom. With a thought, he first created the waters, and placed in them a productive seed: this seed became an egg, [or globe,] in which he was himself born,

[or manifested,] in the form of Brahma, the great forefather of all spirits.”\*

In all the ancient descriptions of the creation we can trace a resemblance, in some cases very close, to the Mosaic account; but in no case is the relation complete or consistent, but bears marks of perversion through human ignorance and superstition.

There are found also, in the earliest writings extant, various traditions confirmatory of other relations given in the first part of the Book of Genesis, such as the first sin of man, the mysterious agency of the serpent in introducing evil into this world, and the expulsion from Eden. But as the evidence is in this case remote, and open to many objections, it does not comport with the object and size of this book to adduce it at length. Facts bearing upon the subject may be found in Dean's *Worship of the Serpent*, Pigott's *Manual of Scandinavian Mythology*, Smith's *Patriarchal Age*, &c., and are familiar to every student of ancient history.

\* Cory's *Inquiries, Metaphysical, Mythological, &c.* London: Pickering. 1833. Vol. ii, p. 14.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE TOWER OF BABEL, AND THE CONFUSION OF  
TONGUES.

HISTORY becomes faint and indistinct as you trace it upward toward the beginning of the world. It consists of fragments of the skeleton of the ages, just sufficient to enable some historical Cuvier to decide the nature of the race, or the empire to which they belong; but the muscles and sinews, and above all the *heart*, the spirit of those past times, where are they?

The light of divine revelation shines brightly on the apex of the pyramid of human history. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth—that is, the top-stone of the structure, clear as crystal, and reflecting heaven's own light; but, as we descend the slowly-widening structure toward our own time, clouds and darkness rest upon it, here and there slightly rent and dissipated, till, toward the bottom, cleared away, we have what is called the light of the present day.

All the history we have of the first three thousand years of the world is not equal in amount to a common modern biography of a single person. How evident is it, therefore, that it must be fragmentary, disjointed, and easily perverted and misunderstood! Is it strange that it should often perplex by its conciseness and mysteriousness? One thing may, however, gratify us; it is only the most prominent and strongest parts, only the most valuable facts that will survive the wreck of ages. The creation is a sublime fact, standing alone amid facts; the fall of man is a terrible truth, giving colour to all history; the deluge is so tremendous a subject that it could not be overlooked; and the next great fact in human history, worthy of the notice of the inspired penman, is the theme of this chapter.

The building of Babel, and the dispersion of its builders, is the only fact recorded of a thousand years. Let us inquire into its significance.

Whether all men then living on the earth participated in this enterprise, which seems to have been displeasing to God, it is impossible to determine. The unsophisticated reader of the Bible, not noticing the fragmentary character of these early annals, would suppose that all were

engaged in the work. It is probable that the population of the world at the building of Babel was much larger than at the time of the deluge; and indeed, previous to the relation of this event, the sacred historian informs us that the name Peleg (or Division) was given to a child, because "in his days was the earth divided." It is therefore the opinion of Augustine, (who lived in the fourth century of our Lord,) and of Luther and Calvin, Patrick, Dr. S. Clarke, and many others, that men already had scattered themselves widely before a certain portion of them, under a leader, projected the building of this tower, which was designed to arrest the further dispersion of man, and to be the centre of a great hierarchy.

Not deciding, then, whether a part or all of mankind were concerned, another question arises. Why was it considered a crime? The design to build a tower or city has no necessary depravity connected with it. Nor are we to understand that they wished to climb into heaven. It was wrong, because it was in direct contradiction to God's expressed will, which was that the families should separate for the purpose of populating the whole earth. It was wrong also, probably, because it was

designed to foster the ambition of a few, and give strength to tyranny, and, we have reason to believe, to support a false religion. How was the project defeated? Not by Jehovah's personally coming down from heaven. Such language is evidently highly figurative, and simply designed to show us that it was the act of God. But God acted, then as now, by human instrumentalities, by the agencies of the elements, and by all of the operations of nature. The speech of men was confounded, by which we may understand their language was made various, and their plans were frustrated. They quarrelled, in fact, and left off their project, which was to build a high tower and city, and they dispersed.

Now it is our present object to inquire whether we have any evidence from profane history, or from philosophy, to authenticate and confirm this singular account. Abydenus, a Chaldean historian, who lived about three hundred years before the Christian era—as quoted by Eusebius, who lived about three hundred years after the Christian era—states: “The first men, relying on their size and strength, raised a tower, reaching toward heaven, in the place where Babylon afterward

stood; but that the winds, assisting the gods, brought the building down on the heads of the builders, out of the ruins of which Babylon itself was built. Before this event men had spoken the same language; but afterward, by the act of the gods, they were made to differ in their speech.”\* Plato also reports a tradition, “that in the golden age men and animals used one common language; but too ambitiously aspiring after immortality, as a punishment, their language was confounded by their Maker.”

“The Sibyl,” says Josephus, “also makes mention of the confusion of language when she says thus: ‘When men were of one language, some of them built a high tower; but God sent storms of wind and overthrew the tower, and gave every one his peculiar language: hence the place was called Babylon.’”†

There is no traditionary evidence of the event. Notwithstanding the revolutions of so many centuries, it is the opinion of many that the ruins of this Tower of Babel still exist. It is thought that the famous Temple of Belus, described by the father of Grecian history,

\* Eusebius, *Præp. Evangel.*, lib. i, cap. 14.

† Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, book i, chap. 4.



Herodotus, was the same; and that the materials of which it was made still are seen in the remains called Birs Nimroud.

This temple was accurately described by Herodotus, as he says, from personal observation. The description makes it equal to any edifice now in the world—far superior to any on the continent of America. It had, however, then been improved by successive generations. For though at first its builders were scattered, afterward, by a few, it was doubtless rebuilt, though not on the original plan, nor for the original purpose.

The amount of wealth said to have been expended in decorating this edifice was more than equal to all employed in commerce in one of our largest cities. "Even now the appearance of the tower is deeply impressive, rising suddenly as it does out of a wide desert plain, with its rent, fragmentary, and fire-blasted pile, masses of vitrified matter lying around, and the whole hill on which it stands caked and hardened out of the materials with which the temple had been built. It is called Nebuchadnezzar's prison, from a tradition that Nebuchadnezzar was there confined during a part of his insanity, when he ate grass like oxen.

“The tower-like ruin on the summit is a solid mass, twenty-eight feet broad. It is rent from top nearly half-way to bottom. At its base lie several immense unshapen masses of fine brick work, some changed to a state of the hardest vitrification, thus affording evidence of the action of fire, which seems to have been the lightning of heaven.”\*

If this be the Tower of Babel, and there seems to be reason to believe it, what a venerable monument is it! Bricks bearing the impress of the hands of the first generation after the deluge. The storms of four thousand years have not been able to efface the works of these first men; and their monument, begun without the divine blessing, and continued in idolatry, may perhaps stand through all time, a record of the power and folly of man.

The confusion of tongues, by which the building was interrupted, and in its first great object thwarted, is a great mystery, upon which it cannot be expected that men will now agree. Dr. Mason Good, and many others, understand it in the popular sense: that previous to that time all men spoke one language, perhaps the Hebrew, or one similar to it; but that then—miraculously

\* Kitto, Article, Tower of Babel.

and abruptly—numerous dialects and new languages were introduced.

Many ingenious arguments have been adduced to sustain this proposition. The beauty, copiousness, and artistic excellence of some languages spoken by barbaric tribes, whose highest excellence in the arts is the construction of an arrow or the tattooing of the body, is appealed to as evidence of a primitive language, spoken by original and civilized man. The unity of principle and design, traceable in all languages, so that the grammar of one language by simple translation becomes the grammar of another, is also adduced as proof of the same proposition. It has also been asserted that the many common terms in languages spoken by nations widely divergent, and between whom there has been no intercourse for many ages, is evidence of the same fact.

Notwithstanding these arguments, strong as they are, to prove the unity of the human race, we do not deem it necessary so to understand the narrative which we are now considering. The confusion of tongues was probably a confusion of *plan*, a quarrel among the projectors and builders, so that they would no longer "listen to each other;" a simple defeat of their un-

holy purpose, which was probably to centralize power beyond what was right, and perhaps to establish a national or universal system of worship which was idolatrous, or in some way displeasing to God. Shallow indeed must be our knowledge of history, if we do not perceive that such an institution would have been full of mischief, and ruinous to the welfare of man. The power of the Almighty, therefore, frustrated the design.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE COMMON ORIGIN OF MAN.

FROM the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of Genesis, it is evidently the doctrine of the Bible that all men are the descendants of one family, and belong to one stock. We assume this to be the doctrine of the Bible, and one fundamentally connected with all its grand teachings.

Like every great truth, it has been called in question by men who have depended upon reason alone; but, though it should not be considered debatable, but definitely decided, by all who receive the Holy Scriptures as the word of God, yet it can be successfully demonstrated by investigation.

It has been asserted that there are in the human family several distinct species, or, as they are sometimes loosely termed, races, each of which must have had a separate origin, distinct from the others in time and place. The foundation of this theory is the acknowledged variety that does exist among men. The most obvious peculiarities are in size, ranging from

seven feet in height to perhaps four feet; in colour, presenting many shades from jet black to pearly white; in the quantity and quality of the hair and beard; in the size and shape of the cranium, and in the consequent amount and position of the brain; and also in some of the bones and muscles of the body, imparting peculiarities to the gait and the features; and in mental tastes, and passions, and intellect.

Notwithstanding the above acknowledged varieties, and also others less obvious, reasons satisfactory and abundant exist, even apart from the Bible, for the firm belief that all human beings are absolutely of one species, and sprung from one stock.

The several facts, or classes of facts, which lead to the firm conclusion that all men are of one species, may be thrown into the form of reasons, which we shall proceed successively to state.

*First reason.*—If we assume for a moment that all men belong to one species, it does not follow that all must be *precisely identical* in size, shape, complexion, mental disposition, or ability. A certain amount of dissimilarity must be considered possible, even in the same race.

Members of the same family, having the same parents, and educated as far as possible under the same regimen, are still various, and sometimes widely and strangely so. A forest, sprung from the acorns of a single oak, shall present some trees tall and straight, others dwarfed and twisted; some smooth and others rough, some spreading and others narrow; and in the whole grove there shall not be found two precisely identical in any of twenty particulars. And if we suppose a part of those trees to be transplanted, some to a sandy, others to a marshy soil; some placed on a limestone foundation, others on clay; some in a cold climate, others in a warm; the variety will become more marked, and, to some, more surprising.

In like manner a *certain* degree of variety *can* exist among the men of a *single* race, sprung from a single stock; and, that being allowed, it becomes a matter of great difficulty (indeed we think it an impossibility) to decide just how far that variety can extend.

Let us suppose that all the variety in the human family was no greater than that which does exist among the class of men commonly called the Anglo-Saxon race: let us suppose that the darkest complexion on earth was no

darker than the darkest Anglo-Saxon, the shortest men no shorter, the tallest men no taller, and the men with the straightest or most curly hair with hair no more straight or curly than the same extreme in the Anglo-Saxon race,—there would still be a variety; and a variety, too, which it would be impossible to account for, just as it is impossible to show why the apple-trees, sprung from the seeds of a single apple, shall all bear different kinds of fruit, and not one of them just like its mother, and yet all of them so nearly alike as at once to be known as apples.

Now this fact, that some variety could and would exist in *one species*, predisposes us to believe that all the present actual variety does exist in one race; and this view is confirmed by the obvious reflection, that however little that variety might be, if it was the greatest existing, it would astonish observers, and be, in the present stage of physiological knowledge, unaccountable.

The amount of this reason is, that there is no antecedent improbability in the view that all men are sprung from one race; but that, on the other hand, that tendency of mind which leads us to select out of two supposed causes



the simpler, would lead us to believe in the common origin of man.

*Second reason.*—The second reason for our view is this:—Great as the existing differences between what may be termed the races of men are, they may all be regarded as superficial and not radical distinctions.

By a superficial distinction we mean one in development and appearance, rather than in fact,—a difference in the strength and size of the parts of the body, or in the activity of the faculties of the mind, rather than an absolute deficiency or excess in either. By a radical difference we mean a possession by one party of a bodily organ, or mental faculty, absolutely absent from the other. If, for instance, a race of men should be found without arms, or with only one arm, or with three distinct arms, the third being joined to a particular part of the body with its own joints and muscles, we should call that a radical distinction. We should in such a case be inclined to suppose that this peculiar race might have had a separate origin; though, even then, before deciding, we should ask for further tests, which will be mentioned hereafter. But no such radical difference exists.

The most opposite extremes in the human family have precisely the same bodily organs and functions, and the same mental faculties and powers. All the race, for instance, are coloured. The skin of every human being is threefold, consisting of the cuticle and the dermis, and the middle or colouring matter, which in the negro, and Moor, and others, is thick, and in the Europeans thin; in the latter almost transparent, in the former black; but it exists in both. Precisely so is it with the hair. In the one "race" it is short and curly, in the other long and straight; but it is hair in both, with precisely the same properties and uses, and generally developed on the same parts of the body.

Indeed, we do not forget that there is a common type, according to which all animals, and especially all mammalia, seem to be formed; that all have nearly, if not quite, the same organs, in some largely, in others little developed; and that in some only traces or useless marks of an organ can be found; still there are radical distinctions between the animals of any two species, by which they could be positively and unerringly designated, without referring to colour or size. The long tibia of the orang-

outang, for instance, and the total destitution of the vocal apparatus, or inability in this animal to form articulate sounds, the shape and size of its head, and the peculiar formation of its hands, distinctly separate it from the family of man.

But no such radical distinctions are found among the "races" or individuals of men. All the differences are slight, such as the weakness of the lower part of the leg of the African, and the prominence of the muscles forming the heel, compared with the other races. Such also as the prominence of the cheek bones, and the flatness of the nose and roundness of the eyes, which appear in different races.

Perhaps, however, the most singular and important peculiarity of all is the smallness and flatness of the skull, which are affirmed to characterize the African, and many of the darker races of men.

This, however, may be regarded as a superficial distinction, and may easily be accounted for. There is a difference between the average size of the brain and of the cranium of the savage tribes of man and man in a more civilized state, as has been successfully shown; but the difference is no more marked, nor even greater

than between individuals and classes confessedly of the same race, and even of the same nation. There are as many as fifteen anatomical differences between the brain of an ape and that of a human being ; but not one of these peculiarities is absent in the lowest specimens of humanity.

*Third reason.*—Our third reason for the firm belief that all men are of one species is strong and unanswerable, viz.: In all the great and obvious and radical features of body and mind, all men are identical.

We shall consider this first physically. In the study of anatomy it would be impossible for the surgeon to acquire a correct knowledge of all the parts, bones, muscles, nerves, and blood-vessels of the body by dissecting oxen, or dogs, or baboons, or any class whatever of beasts. He must dissect the human body. In former times, from a prejudice against the minute examination of the human body, physicians confined their attention to the dissection of brutes, and the consequence was an imperfect knowledge of the science, and many erroneous opinions. The obvious reason is, because that, though in some respects there is a wondrous similarity between the bodily organs of many beasts and man, there

are in others radical differences. But no such *differences* exist among the various classes of men. The body of a negro or an Indian is found in all respects like the body of a white man.

The same small differences are found between members confessedly of the same race, and sometimes of the *same parentage*, as exist between the different races of men. It would not be strange to find a white man, with no Indian blood in his veins, who should have all those peculiarities attributed to the Indian in a greater degree than even the majority of Indians themselves.

*Fourth reason.*—All the variety that does exist among men may be satisfactorily accounted for.

Whether the first human being was white, black, or red, it may be impossible to determine; but that all the present varieties may have descended from one is not unreasonable. We do not attribute this to climate alone, nor food, nor habits, nor any one cause; but in all combined is found sufficient influence. Still it cannot justly be demanded that we account for all this variety: like many other acknowledged facts, it may remain forever an inscrutable mystery.

But let it be observed, first, that *some* variety, even in the members of *one* race, is presupposed, and *must exist*.

Secondly. Any peculiarity, however caused, has a tendency to become permanent, and to descend from parent to child.

Thirdly. A family thus peculiarly marked, if separated from other families, and allowed to form a tribe, would impart its peculiarity to all its descendants.

In the earliest ages of the world men did not mingle as extensively as now. In many instances a few families wandered away from the central body and formed a nation, between whom and others nearly all communication ceased; and they thus had time in successive generations to render permanent their separate type or development of human nature.

Why should it be thought strange that Ham, or one of his sons, through causes not understood, may have been of dark complexion and curly hair, and have enstamped upon his progeny his peculiar marks? Would it have been more strange than the varieties now introduced into plants by cultivation, and into animals by breeding and by accident?

Not many years ago there appeared in Eng-

land a native called "the porcupine man." A part of his body was covered with a sort of feathers or quills. But what is equally strange, his children had the same peculiarity. Now would it have been incredible if that family, isolated from all others, had introduced into the world a new division of human beings, "the porcupine men?" Would such a result astonish a practised gardener, or a scientific breeder of stock? Is not nature alone, in everything that has generations, continually producing *varieties*, deviations from the common type, and stamping them with *permanency*? Occasionally a human being is found with six fingers on each hand, and the peculiarity has been known to be transmitted: if efforts had been made, would it be strange if a twelve-fingered nation of human beings had been formed?

Perhaps it is not historically known that all dogs are of one species or race, yet it is abundantly probable. It is *historically* known, that greater permanent varieties than exist among human beings have been brought about among domestic animals. This is true of the horse, the ox, the sheep, and the hog.

Not longer ago than A. D. 1791, on the farm of one Seth Wright, in Massachusetts, one lamb

of a large flock, without any known cause, had a larger body and shorter legs than the average, with the fore-legs crooked. He called it the otter sheep, from its resemblance to the otter. By separation and care a new breed of sheep have thus been introduced into the market. Instances no less remarkable and definite are very numerous, though even one would be sufficient to decide a question of fact.

*Fifth reason.*—In spite of the attempts of philosophers occupying the other extreme of this question, and maintaining that not only are all men descended from one stock, but that even apes, orang-outangs, and perhaps other animals, share with them the same honour—all animals having descended from one—a very strong and conclusive fact, decisive of the question, is, that no two different species of animals can mingle and form a third that is capable of an independent existence.

There is not a single known instance of this on record. Hybrids are incapable of a *permanent propagation* of their species,—generally incapable of any propagation. The bearing of this argument and its conclusiveness are so evident as to need no elaboration or enforcement.



These arguments are unanswerable, and must induce, in candid minds at least, an equipoise of judgment, an acknowledgment that the doctrine may be and probably is true, and *that it never can be proved untrue*. But we have still more to urge in favour of the Biblical statement.

It seems to have escaped the notice of philosophers, that there is an argument of a higher and nobler character, an argument which, if it is not capable of as mathematical and rigidly exact delineation, is yet as instructive and convincing, and more sublime.

Man has not only a body, but a soul,—a soul distinct in kind from the spirit or mind of a beast. If any deny it, with them argument would be useless, and controversy folly. It is a proposition resting only upon naked observation, needing no proof, and which cannot be denied without a subversion of the very elements of knowledge. That man is not the same as an ox, we believe, not merely because their bodies are different, but because the one has a soul not belonging to the other. Souls have their distinctive properties and characteristics as well as bodies; and we propose to consider all those groups or classes of living creatures, properly

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and commonly called human, and examine the lineaments of their spirits, and inquire if we cannot find in them not only traces, but proofs of a community of nature and origin.

In this inquiry we must of course reject all that mental development which other animals share in common with man. Nor will this be deemed unfair by any candid person; for this degree of mental development is possessed by many races or species of animals known to be distinct: and this degree of mental development is not supposed to prove anything. Certainly those claiming to believe that the man of Asia and the man of America are distinct and independent species, will not contend that the sheep and the ox are one, simply because the mind of one is nearly the same as of the other. And at the same time we do not believe any one so obtuse or absurd as to deny that a mental power may be as marked a characteristic of a race as any bodily feature. They ought not, therefore, to complain if in the argument we reject as unworthy of consideration that degree of mental development which seems necessary to the perpetuation of the species and the prolongation of life, for this proves nothing. We shall not consider the pos-

session of the five senses, the power of locomotion, the mental action necessary for obtaining food and providing suitable shelter, nor even of forming attachments for each other, as having any bearing whatever upon the subject. The range of mind which we propose to examine is higher—in a word, it is *human*. There are indeed sometimes strange exhibitions of mental power in beasts; strange because exhibited by them, and its very strangeness proves the evident and infinite difference between them and man, for the wisest brute never approximated the wisdom of human beings; and when examined, all its wisdom will be found to belong to what may be called a low department of mind, though oftentimes sufficient to distinguish it from other brutes; while, universally, men exhibit a *kind* of soul entirely above and distinct from the mind of brutes.

The argument is simply this: that all the so termed races of men now existing on the earth possess and exhibit mental action and power *peculiar to them as men, and common to all*. In considering this argument we are not to notice idiots or insane persons, any more than in conducting the physiological argument we should consider *lusus naturæ*, or monstrosities, oc-

occasioned by some known or unknown infraction of the laws of nature.

In examining the *common* mind of man we scarcely know where to commence; nor is it an important point, provided only that a few prominent features be presented. It may be well, also, to observe, that in some few instances a mental feature may, through ignorance or vice, be imperfectly developed or strangely distorted. The laws which govern mind, though inflexible as those which govern matter, are capable of a much more varied application and effect. The latitude of their action is wider, and the diversity of their product greater. This fact renders metaphysics a more complicated study than physics, and should warn us to observe closely lest fancy be substituted for fact; but it cannot be denied that law prevails in mental action, and that only to the ignorant is it a maze without a plan.

That mental character which leads to the establishment of government, and which, largely developed, produces the organization of nations and the ready submission of the multitude to existing authorities, is common to all races of human beings. All mankind are governed by patriarchs, chiefs, sachems, presidents, or kings. There is not a language or dialect in this babel of

earth that has not a term synonymous with ruler or king. We have never yet heard of a tribe so degraded as to be entirely destitute of government; indeed, the very word tribe presupposes it. And where have human beings been found existing in a motley, incoherent mass? Should such be found, they would be so small a minority, and so evidently dehumanized by some particular circumstance, as to be no more worthy of affecting our opinion on the unity of the human race than the occupants of our insane asylum. If it be said that the bee, and the beaver, and some other animals, have an organized government, we acknowledge it, but reply that in this respect only they resemble man, and not in others, while animals generally do not thus resemble him; and in the few species that do exhibit this peculiarity, it is the result of instinct and not of reason. The difference between the two is well known. Instinct is a blind undeviating result of an incomprehensible impulse, entirely different from the varied effects flowing from the exercise of the reason of man. Is not this fact, then, that men universally have a government, indicative of a common nature in man?

Another fact of a similar character, is the universal practice among men of assisting or

regulating nature in the production of food, by the cultivation of the soil. If this is not universal, it is practiced by a vast majority of the human family, including the most diverse in appearances and customs. We are not permitted in this argument to state that agriculture was the employment of the first man, for the subject is to be examined wholly independently of any information communicated by the Bible. But it is a fact patent to the observation of all, that both in torrid, tropical and frigid zones, both among the most degraded and enlightened men, the culture of the earth is a characteristic of man. And as every fact embodies a thought, this great fact must be an exponent of a mental feature common to the whole human family. Such, also, is the practice of taming many of the lower animals, and subjecting them to his service. The reindeer of the Siberian, the elephant of the Asiatic and African, the camel of the desert, the horse and ox of the European, and the dog of every clime, by their service, exhibit a common tendency in man to seek his own convenience and pleasure through them.

These and other similar practices, such as the wearing of clothing for the concealment and

protection of the body, prove the existence of a common reason in all human beings, which enables them to exercise a voluntary sovereignty over nature for their own support and happiness, and thus betokens a common nature and origin.

The mental aspect of the argument from language is often strangely overlooked. Waiving for the present the argument deduced from the common character of languages, and the universal prevalence of some important terms, we urge that the *bare fact* that all human beings can articulate, and do convey to each other thoughts and emotions by words, is no trivial evidence of a common nature and origin. Man is a talking animal, and he alone can claim that appellation. Now, to be able to converse, as every tribe of human beings can, implies not only the possession of a peculiar physical apparatus for the utterance of sounds, but also of mental ability, enjoyed alone by man on earth. The grammatical structure of the meanest and feeblest dialect requires the power of generalization and abstraction involving a noble exercise of the pure reason,—and this power is possessed by all men. Still further, each is capable of learning the language of the other.

The Chinese can change his stunted, jerking dialect for the more copious and exact language of the English; the mellifluous Italian can learn the harsh guttural of the Ojibway. The experiment has been tried on an extended scale, and we know that any man can acquire the dialect of any other, even as we know that iron is magnetic or that water will freeze. Who can fail to see in this an evidence of the common nature of man?

The common nature of man may be seen, also, from the universal possession of what may be termed the mathematic talent. But few, if any, tribes of men have been found that were not accustomed to enumerate, at least to a limited extent; and by far the majority have names for the numbers up to ten, and by tens to hundreds and thousands; and all, without exception, are capable of learning the art.

All these practices prove the possession of reason, and the facts still further to prove this are almost innumerable. Besides this, we might refer to the almost if not quite universal prevalence of certain passions, such as the love of approbation or vanity, evinced by the gaudy dress of the savage and the princely palace of the civilized,—the heroism of him who fights



with the tomahawk, and of him who wields the sword,—a fondness for amusement, attested by the war-dances of the barbarian, the athletic games of the half-civilized, the festivals and shows of the enlightened; but we hasten on to what we consider by far the highest and most convincing proof of the spiritual unity of the human race. And this is the universal prevalence of the religious element of character in man. No brute ever yet felt a religious emotion; no sane man ever lived incapable of feeling it. Asiatic, African, European, and American agree in this. What sadder description of the degradation of a tribe of human beings can be given than this: they appear to be destitute of a religion. Wholly destitute of some faint traces of religious worship, none have been found. The African worships his fetish, the Hottentot a snail; while the Chinese bows before the image of his ancestors, and the Indian before the god of the hunter and of war; and all alike are capable of learning the sublime doctrines of the Bible, and the simple story of the cross. This we regard as the crowning proof of the spiritual unity of the human race. The Bible has already been printed in scores of languages, and in each has found intelligent readers and listeners, who

have bowed before God and believed in Jesus Christ. Missionaries have visited every clime, and many if not all races of men; and though besotted by error, and clouded by superstition, in all souls is found a nature responsive to its grand promises and its authoritative claims. "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia and in Judea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, do hear"—and understand when they hear—"them speak in their own tongues the wonderful works of God." The highest exercise of the soul is the religious exercise, and of this all are capable; and of this all nations that have not the true, have a counterfeit. This proves the unity of the human race. Their souls exhibit every degree of development, but in spirit they are one. The difference between the greatest extremes is scarcely greater than between the greatest extremes in those acknowledged to be of one race, and we therefore feel confirmed in the Scriptural doctrine, that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth."

If it be asked why, then, any have doubted this doctrine, the answer must be that they have studied the physical rather than the mental and spiritual character of man. The variety in complexion, height, features, and form has puzzled them, though it is easy to find persons in any one race, according to their own classification, differing from each other nearly or quite as much as the average types of the different races as classified by them. Therefore we find that the untenable dogma of a variety of races is entertained principally by men who study merely nature and not mind, matter and not spirit, the body and not the soul. No metaphysician or philosopher, truly so called, has ever inculcated or indulged the notion.

To the views we have presented, one plausible objection may be made. It may be acknowledged that all men have a common spiritual nature, but it may be affirmed that nevertheless their origin is diverse. In other words, God has created at different times different races, of the same mental and spiritual character and capabilities. To this we reply, it is a mere untenable hypothesis, the anti-scriptural nature of which should condemn it. But besides being anti-scriptural, it is also unphilosophical. It is

an acknowledged principle of philosophy, that when two causes equally satisfactory of any phenomenon are suggested, we must always choose the simpler. It would be superfluous on the part of the Almighty to have created five or five hundred races—and if there is more than one there may be five hundred—of men, all alike in nature, when one race alone, by migration and increase, would answer the purpose. Indeed, the notion of a multiplex origin of man is a hasty conclusion from narrow observation, a figment of fancy, which rears towering structures on very narrow foundations.

Behold, therefore, the absurdities into which this view must lead. We are gravely informed by a theorist\* that the modern inhabitants of Europe consist of five or six—why not fifty?—races, utterly incapable of permanent mixture or consolidation; that the condition of Asia is no better; and that America, where, alas! men of all races are congregated together, as in some heterogeneous menagerie of strange animals, the present inhabitants are doomed by an unnatural combination of races to utter destruction; while the handful of savages remaining, originally begotten on and *from* the soil, shall yet arise in the

majesty of their nature, and roam again with their buffaloes over the *debris* of its present intruders! And to support this strange theory, history must step aside, facts must be ignored, philosophy must be despised, and common sense forgotten.

We are not unaware of the physical objections to the unity of the human race, nor of the plausible arguments which are adduced against it; we have surveyed them carefully, and believe that the opposite view introduces ten difficulties without removing one, and demands a belief in enormous and purposeless miracles, not only opposed to universal experience, but utterly beyond the credulity of a well-trained reason and philosophic mind. It is the same hasty deduction which led the ancient heathen to believe in "gods many" instead of the one God; that leads equally hasty thinkers to believe in races many and many creations, instead of one human family, the individuals of which have been subjected for ages to various influences, which have left permanent and inherited traces, the origin and classification of which are yet to be attained by true philosophical inquiry and research. The notion of diversity is a plunge backward in science, and is directly opposed to that comprehen-

sive generalization which leads the true philosopher to seek unity instead of complexity of laws and causes, and to anticipate from a simplicity of means an endless diversity of effects.

The bearing of this subject on the great enterprise of reform, the perfection of man or of Christianity, the conversion of the world, all can see. As an immortal agent on probation, every man is our brother, every woman our sister. Marked differences there may be, both in physical, mental, and moral development—indeed, the true theory demands these differences, and attributes them all to the effects of education and circumstance—but as moral beings, accountable to God and bound to the bar of Christ, all are equal. In Adam all fell; Jesus Christ died for all. The Bible is designed for all, and all may by the Holy Spirit be rendered holy, and meet for everlasting communion with God. Already individuals in many races have been truly humanized and exalted by the blessed influence of the true religion. The first disciples of Christ were Jews, Greeks, and Romans. Africans and Goths, Saxons and Celts, have been humbled by its strict exposure of their depravity, and converted by its sovereign efficacy. In later times, through the instruction of mis-

sionaries, Ethiopians, the aborigines of America, Orientalists, Greenlanders, Chinese, and Hottentots, have learned the name of Jesus, and been cheered by the "good tidings of great joy."

There is no bar to the admission of the gospel in any race, for with Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, bond nor free! Even now prayers are ascending to God and his Son in many languages, and will yet, we trust, in all; and in the sublime vision of heaven described by the Revelator, we see "a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kingdoms, and people, and tongues," standing before the throne and giving praise to God and the Lamb. The Lord hasten the time when the whole earth shall be an ante-chamber of heaven! For this consummation, all Christians should earnestly labour and devoutly pray.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE CALL OF ABRAHAM.

THE opening act of the grand scheme of the world's regeneration, according to the Bible, was the call of Abraham. Before we examine it, a few preliminary considerations may be profitable.

What would be the condition of man without any revelation from his Creator? Is human infancy itself more helpless and hopeless than the race would be, destitute of divine instruction? The infant has instincts which, met by the care of the mother, enable it to live; so man as a race has instincts, which, met, and confirmed, and guided by revelation, elevate and ennoble him; an instinct to acknowledge God, an instinct to worship, to love right and hate wrong, to long for an immortality, and to provide for the unending future. These are instincts characteristic of man, peculiar to him, sometimes feeble, sometimes unnaturally active; always useless, generally injurious, unless responded to and



guided by a pure system of religious belief,—such a system as the Bible contains, such a system as man could not invent, still less authenticate; such a system, in fine, as God alone could give.

Now, has God left the world without a revelation? Is it not a want of man? Is it not an essential to human perfection? Is not the world an incomplete machine without it?—the very governing power wanting, and, consequently, the more rapid its motion, the higher its development, so much the more evident and dangerous its imperfection.

The Utopian schemes of infidelity, to harmonize and bless the world by the reign of reason, have, over and over again, even to the satisfaction of their enthusiastic votaries, been proved more delusive than a sick man's dreams. The ambition of these votaries was good; but that even they stole from the Bible. You may search the history of the world downward from its beginning, and previous to Christ and his apostles, you will not find the name of one who either laboured for, or expressed a desire for blessing *the whole world*. Reformers there were, on a small scale, like Confucius, Zoroaster, Solon, and others; but they never extended their vision be-

yond the confines of the nation that gave them birth. Even the Hebrew prophets, who foretold the redemption of the world, could not explain the method, and gave no exhortations to be active in bringing it about. It was reserved for the Nazarene and his fishermen-apostles first to give body to the thought, and to burn with the enterprise. False reformers since have stolen the thought, perverted the emotion, insanely attempted to accomplish the enterprise, and generally ended in despair for themselves, and an increase of the evils of others.

Voltaire was one of these ardent pseudo-reformers; but hear the wail of agony which, in his matured experience, he deliberately published to the world:—

“Who can without horror consider the whole earth as the empire of destruction? It abounds in wonders; it abounds also in victims: it is a vast field of carnage and contagion! In man there is more wretchedness than in all other animals put together. He smarts continually under two scourges, which other animals never feel,—anxiety and listlessness in appetite, which make him weary of himself. He loves life, and yet he knows that he must die. If he enjoy some transient good, for which he is

thankful to Heaven, he suffers various evils, and is at last devoured by worms. This knowledge is his fatal prerogative; other animals have it not. He feels it every moment rankling and corroding in his breast; yet he spends the transient moment of his existence in diffusing the misery that he suffers; in cutting the throats of his fellow-creatures for pay; in cheating and being cheated; in robbing and being robbed; in serving that he may command; and in repenting of all that he does. The bulk of mankind are nothing more than a crowd of wretches, equally criminal and unfortunate; and the globe contains carcasses rather than men. I tremble, upon a review of this dreadful picture, to find that it implies a complaint against Providence; and I wish that I had never been born."

Such is the wise conclusion of the rejecter of the Bible; such must be the conclusion of every reasonable man, not destitute of heart, who rejects the word of God. Without a Bible, good were it for the world if it had never been made! Take the main-spring out of a watch, and hand the watch to a man who had never seen such an instrument before, and ask him the use of it, and what would he reply? He takes it, examines it, and answers: "So far as I can

see, it is of no value. There is beauty about it, skill exhibited in its structure, but it will answer no purpose. You cannot make the machinery move, or, if you succeed, it moves fitfully, irregularly, and, so far as I can see, it is a useless expenditure of wisdom ; probably the work of some idle person, designed merely to gratify curiosity, or to while away the time." But *restore the main-spring*, and it is an excellent, useful thing.

What the watch is without its governing part, this world would be without a revelation from God. Remove a knowledge of Christ from the world, and it becomes a grand, sublime, vain, and purposeless structure,—a huge monument of the folly of God ! Restore Christ, and it becomes a glorious, harmonious exhibition of the justice, and goodness, and wisdom of God. Believe it who can, that God hath not spoken to man !

There is, therefore, an antecedent probability that a revelation would be given to man ! Man naturally seeks it, looks around for it ; if he does not find it, pitches upon some counterfeit, and is only induced to reject the true one, or pervert it, by an insane attachment to vice which it condemns, or an unwillingness to practise the virtue which it enjoins.

If, then, a revelation is an essential part of this universe, and therefore must exist, what should be our feelings when examining the only system which can, to an intelligent person, urge any claims to be the true one?

It should not surprise us if the method pursued by God, in the government of the world, should not immediately commend itself to our approval.

“What can we reason but from what we know?”

The power of reason is limited to certain subjects, and even upon them needs practice. The child is puzzled by a simple proposition, and when he reaches manhood remains finite; and though keen and discriminating upon some subjects then, is still infantile on others. Who withholds the praise of genius from the poet who writes the songs of a nation, or from the statesman who guides its government? But are the poet and orator necessarily able to act as skilful engineers to lead an army into battle, to paint a portrait, to erect a temple? A man may be a prodigy on a few branches of thought, but feeble upon others; and if he would study them he must begin where other children begin, at the elements, and proceed by regular

advance to the end. How sage and dogmatic were the objections to steam navigation when first proposed! Did not one of the leaders in science demonstrate to his satisfaction, that the crossing of the Atlantic Ocean by a steamship is an absolute and eternal impossibility? Every great truth and great project is met by the strongest and strangest objections from those who do not understand it.

Is it strange, then, that men "dressed in a little brief authority" of science should criticise what must have been forever beyond their imagination, and is beyond their imitation,—God's plan of governing the world? What would be the condition of the physical universe if subjected to the control of our natural philosophers? Would earthquakes be banished, or be perpetual? Would the aurora borealis, of which men can see no use, and meteoric showers and epidemics be continued? And would the government of the intellectual and religious universe be any better if committed to our moral philosophers? The simple fact is, that man is not competent to criticise either nature or revelation. His objections are the crudities of infancy, and must make the angels, as they do good men, either laugh or weep.

The simple question is, Is the Bible a revelation? If so, study and obey it.

Again; many of the designs of God are long concealed, or developed only in a way and place which seem to man remote,—and some are not yet developed.

That little property of water, once deemed miraculous, and still as wonderful, though called natural,—its expansion during freezing,—may have lain dormant and unexercised, and therefore useless, for millions of ages, as it is now in many parts of the world. An angel witnessing the process of creation, if such a fancy is justifiable, might have wondered that the Creator should endow it with this useless attribute; but when the earth became cooled, and water began to *freeze*, then it would appear that the property was essential to render the earth inhabitable.

If we have a correct idea of the Bible, no act recorded in it is trivial. It may appear so, but in ages to come it may show itself to be a master-stroke of Omnipotence to shape the character of the ages.

The early religion of the world was genuine, not an invention of man, and therefore it was pure. Sabianism—the worship of the celestial bodies, and the worship of fire, and, in time, of

images—gradually took the place of true religion. Idolatry puts no restraint upon evil passions, and fast becomes wedded to immorality.

At this juncture God interposed to save the world from a second universal deluge of vice, which would have demanded a second universal deluge of water. He called Abraham to be the “father of the faithful,” the defender of true worship and morality. He was commanded, supernaturally, to leave his native land and countrymen, and enter Canaan, which was to be his and his descendants’ forever. In obedience to this call, Abraham, with his family, left Ur—probably a place now called Urfan, or Edessa, in Assyria—and travelled a few miles toward Haran or Charran,\* where he tarried fourteen years. Then, agreeably to another call, he left his brother Nahor, and departed again with his wife, and his nephew Lot. When he started, he knew not whither he was tending, nor where he should stop. The Spirit of the Lord was his guide, and he determined to travel by day, and feed his flock by night, until he was informed, “This is the place that the Lord hath given to

\* Haran is on a flat and sandy plain, on a small river by the same name, running into the Euphrates, in the northwest of Mesopotamia. It still bears its old name.



you and your posterity forever." After travelling four hundred miles he was permitted to stop, when he found himself in a beautiful country, already partly occupied by a degraded, half-savage, and exceedingly wicked people. From these he was to keep separate, and the promise was given him: "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

Behold the reward of holiness! Is there a more remarkable passage in the Bible than that? Language cannot convey a greater promise than that: all that a man can imagine of good is in it.

And how improbable it was that this should be accomplished! Look at the scene as it was three thousand years ago. The old man (for he was at least seventy years of age) had been worshipping God, with his wife and servants; he was in a strange land, unable to protect himself should enemies attack him, with no son to bear his name, or to inherit his property, or to perpetuate his family; and yet the Lord says: "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will

bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

In process of time all these predictions were strangely fulfilled. A son of his old age, Isaac, was the one through whom he was to become the father of a great nation. At least three million two hundred thousand of his descendants are now in the world,—many of them in our own continent,—leaving entirely out of view the great nation of Arabians, who are descendants of Abraham. His name too is great; his history is known in many lands. Though a simple farmer and shepherd, millions of people are acquainted with his character; and his name is perhaps repeated more frequently than that of any other human being. The Jew, the Christian, and Mohammedan join in giving him praise, and delight to be called his children.

There is abundant traditional evidence of his character, and his name is often mentioned in ancient profane history.

Berosus was an historian, a Babylonian, and a priest. He lived about three hundred years before Christ, and his history bears every mark of

truth. In one of the fragments of his writings still extant is found this testimony concerning Abraham: "After the deluge, in the tenth generation, was a certain man among the Chaldeans, renowned for his justice and great exploits, and for his skill in the celestial sciences."\*

Many other ancient writers have also mentioned Abraham; but their information seems chiefly to have been built upon what is found in the Bible.

The events which happened to Abraham when in Egypt, and their striking confirmation by the late discoveries of the ancient history of that peculiar people, we shall refer to in a subsequent chapter. Suffice it to say, that the brief sketch of the call of Abraham in the word of God is one of its most interesting portions, since with him began that series of special revelations which together constitute the word of God, the foundation of our holy religion. There are, indeed, incidentally mentioned, some great religious truths in the history preceding his time; and there is abundant evidence that the early world was in the possession of a genuine and

\* The Ancient Fragments, containing what remains of the writings of Sanchoniathon, Berosus, Abydenus, Megasthenes, and Manetho. Translated by J. P. Cary. Lond., 1828, p. 86.

complete theory of true religion from the very beginning.

The last prediction given to Abraham, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed," has been accomplished by the redemption through Christ, by which we may be made partakers of everlasting life.

It would be interesting to portray at some length the character of this good man, but it does not comport with our design. A few observations will not be inappropriate. His great characteristic was faith. He never doubted a promise of God. He exhibited this in his emigration. He exhibited this especially in the offering of his son Isaac. According to Scripture, God designed to test Abraham's faith, and therefore commanded him to offer up his son Isaac as a sacrifice. Whether or not Abraham had ever witnessed such a truly horrid sight as a human being put to death by his companions as a sacrifice, we cannot tell. On either supposition, it must have required strong confidence in God to obey him; but he faltered not. Though the journey was continued three days before he reached the required spot, and while travelling on with his beloved son his meditations must have been constantly upon this one subject, he

turned not back. He piled up the wood to consume the offering, and took the knife in his hand to slay his son. "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead."\*

\* According to Sanchoniathon, as quoted by Eusebius in his *Præp. Evang.*, lib. i, cap. x, p. 40, and lib. iv, cap. xvi, p. 156, a mysterious ceremony was common among the early Phœnicians, which he describes as follows:—

"It was an established custom among the ancients, [meaning the Phœnicians,] on any calamitous emergency, for the ruler of the state to offer up, to prevent the ruin, the most dearly beloved of his children, as a ransom to avert the divine vengeance. And they who were devoted for this purpose were offered *mystically*. For Kronus, truly, whom the Phœnicians call *Il*, and who after his death was translated with divine honours to the star which bears his name, having, while he ruled over that people, begotten by a nymph of that country, named *Anobret*, an only son, thence entitled *Jeud*, (it being to this day usual with the Phœnicians so to denominate an only son,) had, when the nation was endangered from a most perilous war, after dressing up his son in the emblems of royalty, offered him as a sacrifice on an altar specially prepared for the purpose."

Now it is highly probable that the above is an ornamented or poetical account of the very offering of Isaac by his father Abraham. The grounds of this opinion are as follows:—

1. *Il*, the Phœnician name of the father, may be a contraction of Israel, which might well be put for Abraham. This is the opinion of Stillingfleet, Scaliger, and others.

2. The title of the only son, *Jeud*, is the very title given in Hebrew to Isaac, when God issues his order to Abraham, Take now thy son, יְהוֹדִיךָ, thy *Jehid*, (thine only son.)

3. *Anobret*, the name of the mother, may signify *ex gratia concipiens*, and therefore applies to Sarah.

4. Abraham might justly be styled a king, and was venerated widely.

From all these circumstances, the probabilities that this is a heathen account of the facts related in Scripture are strong. As, however, this opinion is not unquestionable, we have introduced it in a note. Those who may wish to examine this singular statement further, can consult *Magee on Atonement*, Appendix, No. xli; or *Stillingfleet on Phœnician Theogony*, derived from *Sanchoniathen*.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH.

IN the nineteenth chapter of the Book of Genesis is found one of the most astonishing relations recorded in the Bible,—the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. According to the simple Scriptural account, the inhabitants of a tract of country called “the plain,” including the cities Sodom and Gomorrah, and also Admah and Zeboim, were excessively wicked. From the single instance of their wickedness related, it is evident that they were universally as abandoned to sensuality and as degraded as it seems possible for human beings to be. They had no respect for sacred things, and thought of nothing but to gratify their unholy lusts. God therefore determined to destroy them and their country together, and leave the spot where they lived as a perpetual monument of his indignation.

Lot, a foreigner, who dwelt among them, was comparatively a good man, and unaffected by the corrupt manners of those around him. He,

therefore, received warning of the impending destruction, and was urged to fly for his life, with his family, to the surrounding mountains. He obeyed, but could not induce any of his family to start with him but his wife and two daughters. Having escaped from the city, "the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven." This completely destroyed the cities, and all their inhabitants, and even the wife of Lot, looking back, was changed into a pillar of salt. The next morning, Abraham, rising early, and looking toward the cities and the land of the plain, "beheld, and lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace."

Now we maintain that this strange account, forming a part of the Bible, so well authenticated as a whole, should be implicitly believed, even though no other evidence of its truth existed; but if subsidiary evidence can be found, it will serve to add confirmation to sacred writ. We purpose, then, to examine this history faithfully.

According to the chronology which we adopt, this event took place about two thousand years before Christ, in an age of which we have but few historical traces, and these faint and imperfect, except what are found in the Bible. The



authentic history of China, according to Confucius himself, their most noted author, does not reach this period by nine hundred years.\* The history of Hindostan begins to be authentic about at the date of the event we are contemplating, according to the Septuagint.†

Of the nations that dwelt in the immediate vicinity of the place where this catastrophe is said to have happened, no ancient history is extant from which we could reasonably expect a mention of this event. But there is another source whence we might look for confirmation, and that is the geological character of the country, or the appearance of the spot where the cities are said to have been burned with fire from heaven. Examining this, we shall not be disappointed. The tempests of nearly four thousand years have not been sufficient to remove the evident traces of that conflagration, the scar of that wound that was then made on the surface of the earth.

The River Jordan runs through Palestine,

\* Asiatic Researches, vol. ii, p. 370. Subsequent researches have indeed led to the conclusion that the early history of the Chinese, commencing even two thousand nine hundred and fifty-three years before Christ, may be regarded as semi-authentic; but it is brief and imperfect, and confined to its own emperors or dynasties. (Squiers's Chinese as they Are, p. 8.)

† Ibid., vol. ii, p. 143.

from north to south, and empties into an inland lake, called the Dead Sea. It has been the general opinion that before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah it passed on beyond its present termination into the Red Sea. At any rate, the Dead Sea now lies where Sodom and Gomorrah formerly were. If there were any sea there before the destruction of those cities, it was but small, compared with its present size. Now, in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis, it is incidentally mentioned that the Vale of Siddim, which was near Sodom, was full of slime-pits, or abounded in bitumen. This was probably the geological character of the whole plain. The soil itself was semi-combustible.\* Its destruction was doubtless accomplished either by volcanic action, producing electricity and storms, or primarily by lightning from heaven, which, setting on fire the bitumen in several places, produced a destruction so rapid that the guilty inhabitants could not escape. Earthquakes, volcanic action, and lightning often attend each other, and all together, doubtless, accomplished the ruin of these cities.

The Dead Sea and surrounding country bear

\* There is a similar bituminous combustibile tract of country now in the island of Trinidad. (Lyell's Prin. of Geol., ch. xvii.)

evident traces of this great conflagration. The asphaltum or bitumen is not all consumed, but masses of it still exist in the bottom of the lake, and are often detached, and float to the surface. Sulphur abounds in the vicinity of the lake, which is a sure sign of previous volcanic action, masses of sulphur never having been produced by nature in any other way. A black, shining stone is also found, which is combustible; and the water of the sea is so impregnated with various salts that fishes will not live in it, and even travellers upon its surface are often covered with a greasy, bitter substance, deposited from the spray.

It is thought that "the plain" of Sodom and Gomorrah was where the southern portion of the Dead Sea now is; and by the volcanic action at the time of their destruction, the soil was consumed or sunken, and the waters of the Jordan running in formed the sea, under which are buried the monuments and wealth,—if any escaped the flames,—and the bodies of the degraded and wretched inhabitants.

The late United States expedition for exploring the Jordan and the Dead Sea has thrown much light on this subject, and, like all other careful investigations, serves but to confirm the Bible. Captain Lynch, the commander of the

expedition, has written a faithful account of all the investigations by the company. They spent twenty-two days upon this gloomy sea, encountering many dangers, and suffering excessively from the briny spray, which in time of storm settled upon them, conveying a prickly sensation wherever it touched the skin, and exceedingly painful to the eyes. Indeed, the health of all the men was unfavourably affected, and nothing but a strong determination to accomplish their task induced them to persevere. They sounded every part of the sea, examined its bottom and its shores, and this is their conclusion, in the words of Captain Lynch:—

“The inference from the Bible, that this entire chasm was a plain, sunk and ‘*overwhelmed*’ by the wrath of God, seems to be sustained by the extraordinary character of the soundings. The bottom of this sea consists of two submerged plains, an elevated and a depressed one; the first averaging *thirteen* and the last *thirteen hundred* feet below the surface. Through the northern, the largest and deepest one, in a line corresponding with the bed of the Jordan, is a ravine, which again seems to correspond with the Wady el Jeib, or ravine within a ravine, at the south end of the sea.

"Between the Jabbok and the sea we unexpectedly found a sudden break-down in the bed of the Jordan. If there be a similar break in the water-courses to the south of the sea, accompanied with like volcanic characters,\* there can scarce be a doubt that the whole Ghar has sunk from some extraordinary convulsion, preceded, most probably, by an eruption of fire, and a general conflagration of the bitumen which abounded in the plain. I shall ever regret that we were not authorized to explore the southern Ghar to the Red Sea.

"But it is for the learned to comment on the facts we have laboriously collected. Upon ourselves the result is a decided one. We entered upon this sea with conflicting opinions. One of the party was sceptical, and another, I think, a professed unbeliever of the Mosaic account. After twenty-two days of close investigation, if I am not mistaken, we are unanimous in the conviction of the truth of the Scriptural account of the destruction of the cities of the plain."†

\* There is such a break, from a hundred to a hundred and fifty feet in height. (Robinson's Researches, vol. ii, p. 498.)

† Narrative of the United States Expedition to the River Jordan and the Dead Sea. By W. F. Lynch, U. S. N., Commander of the Expedition, pp. 379, 380.

We are greatly indebted to this captain in the navy for his candid expression of matured and firm opinion.

We have but little more to present on this subject. The statement that Lot's wife was changed into a pillar of salt has been ridiculed by some who have not taken the trouble to investigate the subject. We would simply inquire, What could have induced Moses to make this assertion, if it was not a fact? An imagination must have been wild to have invented such a story; and yet the strangeness of the occurrence, if it be confirmed, but adds strength to the history.

The fact was probably this: The wife of Lot did not credit the threatened destruction. She was only induced to accompany her husband by his strong solicitations, and, even then, she at last lingered far behind; and Lot himself just escaping in the little town of Zoar, on the shore of the sea, she was overtaken by the falling embers, and the falling salt, suffocated and buried or incrustated on the edge of the sea, and remained there as a sort of monument of her own folly and incredulity to future generations. In all this there was nothing unnatural. Josephus, who wrote but a short time after Christ, and

who expresses the belief of the ancient Jews, says, that "Lot's wife, continually turning back to view the city as she went from it, and being too nicely inquisitive what would become of it, although God had forbidden her so to do, was changed into a pillar of salt; *for I have seen it, and it remains to this day.*"\*

Perhaps Josephus, and Clement of Rome, and Irenæus were mistaken about seeing this pillar, so late as they lived, and perhaps they were not; though that such was the fate of the unbelieving woman we cannot doubt. It is remarkable that even now, as attested by the late exploring company, at the southwest corner of the Dead Sea there is a pillar of solid salt, which seems to have been gradually formed, from forty to sixty feet above the level of the waters. This singular monument is *alone*, the only one of its kind; and who can pronounce it incredible that this is a strange mausoleum of Lot's wife, that will be sundered at the last day to give up its guilty dead?

If it be asked why communities as guilty as ancient Sodom and Gomorrah are not now overwhelmed, we answer as follows:—

1. Though there may be places actually more

\* Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, book i, chap. xi.

*guilty*, morally, on account of their superior light, there are probably no whole cities absolutely so sunk in crime as were these.

2. The relative importance of Sodom and Gomorrah, in that age of the world, was far greater than the same population would be at present. The human family was young; and it is more than probable that had these cities been left to riot in their crimes, as a spot of gangrene will soon destroy the whole body, the whole world would have been corrupted, and demanded a second flood.

3. Moreover, there have been since many instances of as sudden destruction, doubtless inflicted as a judgment by the Almighty.

The circumstances attendant upon this great event are very instructive. The Bible does not afford a better instance of earnest intercessory prayer than that offered by Abraham when he was informed of the impending destruction. It seems that he had no just conception of the excessive wickedness of the cities, and implored the Almighty not to destroy the evil, if that must necessarily include the destruction of the good. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" The Lord promised to spare the cities if fifty righteous men were found in them.



Abraham renewed his plea, and obtained the favourable answer that forty-five should save the country; and again that twenty, and finally that ten righteous men should prevent the destruction. Doubtless Abraham believed that the cities were safe—there must be ten good men in that vast population—and his importunity ceased. He was mistaken. But *one* righteous man, his nephew Lot, was there; and he, though by no means a perfect character, was saved by express revelation from the doom of his neighbours.

Can this account be read without an admiration of God's watchful superintendence over the world as a whole? Let it be understood that all the grand events related in the Bible are master-strokes in the policy of the Almighty, by which he directs the destiny of the nations, shaping his government so as in due time to bring about the sublime result of a regenerated, disenthralled world, delivered from the power of Satan, and rejoicing in the love of its Creator. It is when viewed in this relation, though sometimes the true relation be to us occult, or with great difficulty detected, that the genuine sublimity of God's empire on earth is appreciated.

Standing alone, the dispersion of the nations

at Babel may appear an act trivial for the Almighty, and uncalled for; but its effect was to divide the race into at least three great branches, thus allowing the experiment of man's self-government to be put to a three-fold test. These branches were afterward subdivided, thus affording it a still more extensive test. To one branch we shall find a series of especial revelations was given, extending through two thousand years, beginning with Abraham and ending with Christ and his apostles, while all the other branches had the patriarchal religion, or original revelation, the boon of God to the whole human race. We are satisfied that the healthful and *saving* influence of this original revelation was retained, with much of its pristine vigour and efficacy, down even to the coming of Christ, whose teachings were designed to be universal, and ought long before to have been spread over the entire world. Since that event the minds of the heathen, by human devices and the agency of the devil, have become doubly clouded, and the whole idolatrous world is now groaning for a deliverer, to be found only in Christ. Scarcely a faint glimmer of their original truth remains among them; and every enlightened Christian sees the manacled hands of heathendom beseech-

ingly uplifted, and hears from a thousand dialects the Macedonian cry, Come and help us. Viewed in this light the Dispersion is a great act, fraught with infinite consequences.

It is with a view to God's great plan that all history should be studied; and it is only by him who surveys the whole field that the plan can in any degree be comprehended. Nothing will induce murmuring at Providence more than narrowness of vision, while nothing has a greater tendency to produce strong faith in God's goodness, and truth, and watchfulness, than truly extensive information. A battle-field, on the eve of a great engagement, presents to an unpractised eye a scene of inextricable confusion. Marching and counter-marching; orders given and orders repealed; embankments made where they seem unnecessary, and violent exertions endured for no evident purpose,—all bewilder the man unused to camp or field. But the accomplished general, the master-mind of all this policy, comprehends every step and directs every movement; to him it is a map of beauty, and when this seeming tumult, these

*"discordia semina rerum,"*

shall have finally reached their designed collo-  
cation, he will be prepared for the final move-

ment which shall accomplish the desired result. Thus is it with the government of God ; and it is given to the thoughtful, at least partially, to comprehend his plan ; and it is the privilege of all to adore. Such thoughts of God enlarge the minds of feeble mortals, and can find fit expression only in prayer and praise.

That God, unchangeable, still governs the world ; doomed to destruction no less terrible than that of the wretched inhabitants of these cities are all the wicked ; while upheld by a no less watchful Providence than preserved Lot, are all the righteous.

Recall to mind the words of Christ when pronouncing a woe upon Capernaum : " And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell : for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day." Some, at least, would have repented.

Is there not a practical lesson in this for us ? God never punishes a man on account of the average guilt of the mass ; but he punishes or rewards every individual according to his character. There is also a future judgment approaching, at which even Sodom and Gomorrah will be rejudged : and there are places for whom it

will be less tolerable than for those guilty cities.

They had not the instructions of Christ as have we ; they had not the regular ministrations and service of the Sabbath as have we ; their land was not a land of churches and Bibles ; they were not blessed with a sound public opinion in favour of religion : yet with all their disadvantages they were justly doomed to death, and the future judgment is to be to them terrible, only "more tolerable" than that of Capernaum, and Bethsaida, and Chorazin, and the inhabitants of other places that have sinned more grossly against greater light. •

There are even now sinners against greater light. Against us, if thus guilty, God is indignant, and for us is prepared a more awful doom. But here the voice of a Saviour is heard. Here the gospel, or good news of great joy, is published. Whosoever will, may abandon sin, and the sincerely penitent and prayerful will not be rejected. As yet the heavens betoken no awful destruction. As yet even the pains of fierce disease are held back, and death has not been allowed to seize us. By the great truth which we have just presented, I would confirm the assertion of the Bible,—“It is a fearful thing

to fall into the hands of the living God." But with Christ as a Mediator and a Saviour it will be pleasant to be guarded as Lot was guarded, and saved with Abraham in heaven.

To those who have commenced a religious life allow me to mention the words of Christ, "Remember Lot's wife." A warning against indecision and fickleness of purpose, she should never be forgotten by those who wish to enjoy both Sodom and safety; who would like to flee to the mountains, and yet linger on the plain; who are induced by their pious relatives or friends to take some religious steps, and yet never heartily renounce the world, but linger about it, and gaze upon it; to whom religion is a task, and the world a pleasure; thus proving that both their treasure and their hearts are here, and who cannot possibly escape in the day of God's wrath. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." But so soon as it becomes the full, fixed, absorbing purpose of the heart to obey God, to obey him now, and to obey him at all hazards,—so soon as our faith is plighted to Christ, and our heart becomes married in a perpetual league to his, so soon will we find peace, rest, safety; and the world, having acquired its proper place, we shall be able to enjoy it as a good gift of God;

we shall be able to labour in it, to acquire its property and to use it right, to bear its trials and to perform its tasks, while our chief expectation and joy will be in heaven with God, and our whole soul will have found its proper equilibrium of spiritual repose.

O the religion of Christ is the perfection of man's nature! It calms the tumult of passion, it speaks peace to a troubled conscience, it restrains the mind from doubt and fear, and the whole man from vice and sorrow, and sheds a rich and beautiful lustre even on the dying hour, disclosing to the departing saint a picture of the open gate of heaven.

And what is this religion? Not a mere profession—not becoming familiar with a little Scriptural truth, and joining a Church. The religion of Christ is internal. Its seat is the heart,—the heart, depraved by nature, and the source of evil,—the heart, whose unsanctified passions lead to avarice, anger, profanity, and hatred of God,—the heart, unprepared for communion with God or eternal joy till it is changed,—the heart, converted and sanctified by the power of the Almighty, through Jesus Christ,—the heart then the abode of comfort, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy

Ghost. That man may come into the possession of this, the Bible was given. Every revelation which God has granted to man is a link in a great chain, which is designed to connect this world with heaven. The Bible may be studied, understood, and admired, and yet fail to accomplish its work. We may investigate its evidence, bow to its divine authority, and practise some of its external principles; but unless we allow the promised Spirit of God to control our affections, and yield to its requirements, its promised blessings we cannot enjoy,—its threatened punishments must be our portion.

Let us not delude ourselves with the vain notion that God takes no note of our actions. The sun shone pleasantly the last day upon "the plain." It was a beautiful spot, extended between the mountains. The transparent Jordan wound through it, and it seemed the garden of the earth. Rich vegetation covered it, and it was thronged with a population abounding in wealth. But among them all, save the stranger Lot, not a pious person dwelt! With God's character they were not unacquainted, but to his commands they had no regard: no law of God they acknowledged to be binding; he was not in their thoughts. Their wants all supplied,



they surrendered themselves to luxury and unbridled license. They were warned, but they received their warnings with mockery and hatred. Their cup at last was full.

They believed in God at last, but, alas, it was too late! Aroused from their last slumber in the body, or surprised in the midst of their guilty orgies, the heavens glared upon them, and the earth was on fire beneath their feet; forked lightnings gleamed above them, and, amid falling cinders, and with loud shrieks, scarcely drowned by the awful thunder, they hurried out of their crumbling habitations but to be buried in a sea of molten flame; while the waters of the river rolled upon them, and their smoke rose as from a furnace, and the Dead Sea, as their winding-sheet, now rolls, and has for ages rolled, to cover their remains till the last great day.

Evidence of this expression of the wrath of God still is seen branded on the very earth, so clear and palpable that never has a visitor gazed upon the shores of the Dead Sea without perceiving it, and none but the foolhardy and insane can gainsay it. This evidence we have briefly presented: let it be pondered well, and let the lessons it is designed to teach sink deep

into the heart. Let God's superintendence be acknowledged, let his hatred of sin be appreciated, and let the awful miniature picture of the final day thus presented serve to afford you a glimpse of the terrors which will seize the unrighteous when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up; and doubt not, as the apostle Peter has said, that if God "spared not the old world, but saved Noah, the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in a flood upon the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked; . . . the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."

**NOTE.**—The evidence of this great conflagration is so clear, from present appearances, as described by modern travellers, that we have not thought it necessary to state at length the accounts of ancient writers. Diodorus Siculus, lib. ii, and Strabo, lib. xvi, among the Greeks, describe the place; and among the Romans, Tacitus, in the fifth book of his History, and Pliny, in book v, chapter xvi, and many others, not necessary to mention.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## BIBLICAL REFERENCES TO EGYPT, CONFIRMED BY MODERN RESEARCHES.

ON the banks of the mysterious Nile, at the juncture of Africa, the land of darkness, with Asia, the first home of man, lies Egypt, often, though erroneously, called "the cradle of civilization:" a land famous for its agriculture, its architecture, its mechanical arts, its philosophy, its refinement, and religion, long before Greece and Rome were known. The mechanical instruments of this people, their careful division of labour and various employments, their accomplishment in music, painting, and sculpture; their populousness, and order, and law, and refinement, are perhaps, in the aggregate, not surpassed by the most cultivated people of modern times. They had even their written and pictorial language, their authors and careful historians. But successive deluges of war swept over them. Their wealth constantly excited the lust, and courted the rapacity of conquerors, whose only principle of action was,

might makes right. They were subdued and overrun, at the intervals of centuries, by the Ethiopians, their nearest neighbours; by the Babylonians, under Nebuchadnezzar; by the Persians, under Cambyses; by Alexander, the Macedonian; by the Romans, under Octavius Cæsar; and in modern times by the Arabs and by the Turks. Thus its old institutions, its arts and sciences, its language, oral and written, have been obliterated, and its history for a long time forgotten; so that two centuries ago Egypt was like an antiquated picture covered with smoke and dust, or like an ancient parchment, the production of some famous author of the oldest date, but written over and over again by inferior modern scribes. Egypt was "the basest of kingdoms," and its former splendour unappreciated and almost entirely forgotten. Still there remained dim, and uncertain, and contradictory references to it in Greek and Roman writings; still there existed on its ancient site a people called Copts, who seem to speak a corrupt dialect of its ancient language; still could be seen the statue of Memnon, which, it was said, once uttered musical sounds at the rising of the sun,—and the concealed place in it, and the machinery by which the artful priest used

to perform the miracle for the admiration of the vulgar; still remained the sphinxes, gigantic statues of lions with women's heads; still tombs of kings hewn in the solid rocks; subterranean catacombs, the mysterious and endless labyrinth, the pyramids, oldest and far the grandest works of man; thousands of mummies with their coverings written over with unknown characters, and thousands of paintings, with lines as distinct and colourings as brilliant as though formed by the pencil of yesterday;—all these furnished an old world to be reexplored by the curiosity and research of modern times.

It could not be expected that such a boundless field of study would be neglected by our scholars of enterprise and thought. It has not been neglected. With a strange fascination and a persevering research, Egypt has been explored by the most eminent of modern savans. The expedition of Bonaparte into Egypt opened the way for investigation; and, since that time, Champollion, Rosellini, Dr. Young, Major Felix, Wilkinson, Gliddon, and others, have with unwearied diligence prosecuted their inquiries. Pictures have been brought to light, statues unearthed, the alphabet of their writings discovered, inscriptions deciphered; and if not the

history of Egypt, certainly the manners and customs of this ancient people have been recovered and rewritten, so that what had been a blank for a thousand years and more has been again clearly delineated.

Now it so happens that we have in the Bible a multitude of references to Egypt—direct and incidental—made at the time by writers of the Holy Scriptures, from their professed personal acquaintance with the nation and its inhabitants. It is a question of immense value, and directly falling into the plan of this volume, whether these Biblical references and descriptions are confirmed by the researches of modern inquirers. Does the study of the monuments of ancient Egypt attest the truth of the sacred record? Never was a more exact, abundant, and complete authentication: indeed, nothing more could be desired, or even scarcely imagined. The object of this chapter is to present a few of these confirmations.

It should be premised, that for some reasons which we need not investigate, many of the customs of Egypt were peculiar; they were a singular and peculiar people, differing much from the oriental and other ancient nations. This renders the confirmations of the Bible by the

monuments more striking and convincing. It was at first attempted, by some shallow enemies of the Holy Scriptures, to show that the revelations made by modern inquirers were inconsistent with, and contradictory to, descriptions contained in the Bible; but this effort has been most triumphantly defeated and replied to by Dr. E. W. Hengstenberg and others. Not a pretended inconsistency between the two has been adduced that does not exhibit the ignorance of its authors, while the coincidences are so numerous and striking as to arrest the attention of every inquirer, and to force the conviction upon the mind, even of the sceptic, that the history, at least, contained in the Old Testament is reliable and absolutely correct.

Several historical facts mentioned in the Bible are directly attested. In the twelfth chapter of Second Chronicles the attack of Shishak upon the kingdom of Judah is described, "with twelve hundred chariots and threescore thousand horsemen," and auxiliary forces of "Lubims, Sukkiims, and Ethiopians."

Says Wilkinson:\* "The sculptures he (Shi-

\* Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians. By J. G. Wilkinson, F. R. S., &c. London: John Murray, 1837, vol. i, p. 136.

shak) added on the walls of Karnak show that this campaign is recorded, with the names of the captured places."

In the nineteenth chapter of Second Kings Tirhakah is mentioned, and his successful resistance to Sennacherib, King of Assyria, and the wonderful miracle by which the Assyrians lost by pestilence one hundred and eighty-five thousand men in one night. Now this is commemorated by a record on the walls of a Theban temple, and by a marble statue in the temple of Pthah at Memphis, with this inscription, "Whoever thou art, learn from my fortune to reverence the gods."\* The whole history of Tirhakah and Sennacherib has been recovered by modern investigation.

But, aside from direct historical coincidences which are numerous, and of which the above are a specimen, there are various allusions to peculiar customs and usages in the Bible, which have been strikingly illustrated by the late explorations of ancient Egypt.

The Scriptures state that Egypt was settled by the children of Ham; the ancient hieroglyphical name of Egypt was "the land of Ham."†

\* Wilkinson, vol. i, pp. 140-142.

† Gliddon's Ancient Egypt, p. 41.



The next mention of Egypt is the relation of Abraham's journey to it to escape famine, and of his stratagem to save his wife Sarah from being claimed by the king.\* Now it is a fact, attested by the monuments, that females in Egypt, contrary to the custom of other oriental nations, were allowed to pass freely *unveiled* in society. This is presupposed in the Biblical account.

The next mention of the country is in the memorable narrative of the life of Joseph.

That slavery was an institution recognised, and yet not extensively practised, is abundantly confirmed.†

Joseph afterward became a steward of the king, and in his subsequent exaltation had himself a steward. One of the most common figures on the monuments of the kings is *a steward* "with a pen over his ear, the tablet or paper in his hand, and the writing-table under his arm, either following or going before the servants."‡

In Genesis xl, 16, the chief baker mentions his dream of carrying three white baskets on his head, or, as it is in the marginal translation, three

\* Genesis chap. xii.

† Wilkinson, vol. i, p. 402, &c.

‡ Rosellini, quoted by Hengstenberg,—*Egypt and the Books of Moses*, p. 25.

baskets "full of holes." Now in the paintings lately discovered, *wicker-baskets*, flattened so as to rest one upon another, are represented; and often burdens resting upon the heads of men, while the women geneally carried burdens upon their shoulders.\*

The "magicians of Egypt," frequently spoken of in the Bible, are a class distinctly recognised in the paintings, and peculiar to Egypt.

In Genesis xli, 14, Joseph, before going before the king, "shaved himself," a custom then *peculiar* to the ancient Egyptians. "So particular were they on this point, that to have neglected it was a subject of reproach and ridicule; and whenever they intended to convey the idea of a man of low condition, or a slovenly person, the artists represented him with a beard."†

In fine, without delaying longer upon the narrative of Joseph, suffice it to say that every particular feature of it has been illustrated by paintings lately discovered,—such as the "dress of linen," mentioned in chapter xli, 42, and the gold chain,—both marks of the highest honour; his marriage with Potipherah, verse 45,—a name very common on the Egyptian monuments; his

\* Hengstenberg, p. 27, and Wilkinson, vol. ii, p. 385.

† Wilkinson, vol. iii, p. 357.

gathering the products of the seven years of plenty into storehouses; the *sitting* of the brothers of Joseph at the table with him, apart from the Egyptians, chapter xliii, 32, 33; the divining cup, xliv, 5; all are strikingly depicted on those old monuments.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature in this whole narrative is the alienation of the land from the people by purchase during the seven years of famine, so that afterward they were not owners of the land, but tenants of the king. Now all the profane history of Egypt which is extant confirms this fact.

Herodotus says that the land was divided among the Egyptians by the king, and he obtained his income by an annual rent. Diodorus also gives the same testimony.

According to the paintings and sculptures only kings, priests, and the military order own land.\*

In the fiftieth chapter of Genesis, Joseph is represented as commanding the physicians to embalm the body of his father, that it might be carried with his people when they should leave the country; and at the close of the chapter it is stated that the body of Joseph also was

\* Wilkinson, vol. i, p. 263.

embalmed. The whole process, it is said, continued "forty days," "and the mourning seventy days." Now it is well known that the Egyptians universally embalmed the bodies of the dead; and, according to Diodorus, thirty (and one reading has it forty) days were consumed in the process, and the mourning continued seventy-two days.\* The representations of the processions for the dead, upon the monuments, seem as if constructed intentionally to describe the funeral train of Jacob.

The references made to Egypt in the first chapters of the Book of Exodus are strongly confirmed. It is stated that the oppressed Israelites were compelled to make *bricks mingled with straw*. It is doubtful whether such bricks have been made by any other nation; and yet this fact, incidentally and carelessly alluded to by Moses, is distinctly attested by historians and paintings.

A picture has been discovered in an old tomb at Thebes, on which Rosellini has written an article, entitled "Explanation of a Picture representing the *Hebrews* as they were engaged in making Brick." "Of the labourers, some are employed in transporting the clay in vessels,

\* Hengstenberg, p. 71.

some in intermingling it with straw; others are taking the bricks out of the form, and placing them in rows; still others, with a piece of wood upon their backs and ropes on each side, to carry away the bricks already burned or dried. Their dissimilarity to the Egyptians appears at the first view; the complexion, physiognomy, and beard do not permit us to be mistaken in supposing them to be Hebrews. Among them four Egyptians, very distinguishable by their mien, are seen.”\*

All the various customs alluded to in the early part of the Book of Exodus are abundantly confirmed.

The departure of the Israelites from Egypt was an event so humiliating to Egyptian pride, that no account of it would be expected on Egyptian monuments. References to it however exist in ancient histories, but imperfect; and often the event is confounded with another, the banishment of a race of shepherd kings who had previously conquered a part of Egypt.

The Scripture intimates that Pharaoh was destroyed in the Red Sea; and Wilkinson, who finds the history of this Pharaoh under the name of Thothmes III., says that his successor, Amu-

\* Hengstenberg, p. 81.

noph II., is represented as coming to the throne very young, and under the tutelage of his mother.

Manetho, the most ancient *writer* of Egyptian history whose works are extant, represents that under Thothmes III., a most eminent king, a large multitude of people, left by the shepherd kings, (with whom it is probable the Israelites were mingled,) chose Moses, a learned priest of Heliopolis, for their leader, who made a new code of laws for them, forbidding them to worship the Egyptian gods and sacred animals. Lastly they took arms against the Egyptians, and were beaten in battle and driven out of the country.\*

How different this from the Biblical account; and yet it is evidently a perversion of the true account, which is confirmed by all considerations of philosophy, as well as by a study of the geography of the description and contemporaneous history.

The Israelites exhibit many traces of their early Egyptian residence. Many of the requirements of their law can be understood only by one familiar with ancient Egypt. They were set

\* History of Egypt, by Samuel Sharpe, p. 30. London: Edward Noxon. 1846.

apart to preserve a knowledge of the one God in the world. The Egyptians worshipped the stars as emblems of gods, and Ra, the sun, and Isis, the moon; but this the Israelites were forbidden under penalty of death.\* The Egyptians, like others, bowed before statues; but the Israelites were to "make no image." Some of the Egyptians marked their bodies in honour of their gods; the Israelites must not cut or mark their flesh.† The Egyptians buried food in the tombs with the bodies of their friends; but the Israelites were forbidden to set apart food for the dead.‡

Many rites and usages, not essentially wrong, were borrowed by the Israelites, and remain perpetual attestations of the Scriptural history.

This subject is far from being exhausted. We have simply selected some of the most salient points as specimens of the many. It is evidently proof of insanity to deny the credibility of a history like that contained in the Old Testament, authenticated by existing institutions, by languages, usages, ceremonies, monuments, paintings, other histories, and by the immovable frame-work of nature itself.

\* Deut. xvii, 3.

† Leviticus xix, 28.

‡ Deut. xxvi, 14. See Sharpe's Egypt, p. 34.

## CHAPTER IX.

EARLY SCRIPTURE PROPHECIES, AND THEIR  
FULFILMENT.

It is evidently beyond the power of man to predict, with certainty, any future events, except those growing out of the regular course of nature. It would be safe to foretell that ten years hence the sun will rise at a certain hour in the morning, and the moon be eclipsed at a certain time, on a specified evening. Such predictions require no supernatural skill or knowledge. But the causes which affect human and national character are so various and complicated, that the wisest are most willing to acknowledge that their predictions are only conjecture; and that clearly to foresee any contingent future event transcends the power of man.

Now the Bible professes to present a great number of distinct predictions, some of which have already been verified, and others of which it maintains will be fulfilled; and this is appealed to as strong and satisfactory evidence of the divine origin of the book.



Before examining any specific instances, it is well to inquire when first, and how frequently, and for what purpose, the prophetic power has been given to man. Even before the deluge Noah and Enoch prophesied. The very act of building an ark was prophetic, and the reason assigned for the act must have been prophecy. Of the prophesying of Enoch we have no account in the Old Testament, but the apostle Jude distinctly asserts the fact.

After the deluge, previous to the call of Abraham, Noah prophesied, in the memorable blessings pronounced upon Japheth and Shem, and in the curse pronounced upon Ham through his son Canaan.\* Subsequently Abraham was styled a prophet,† probably because he made known the promises given to him by the Almighty. Isaac and Jacob also prophesied, and Moses and Joshua, and many others in Israel and Judah, till the times of Malachi, whose predictions close the Old Testament. The New Testament also contains many distinct predictions,—some preceding the birth of Christ, many uttered by him and his disciples. Prophecy, indeed, may be regarded as the most valuable and important part of the Old Testament, while in

\* Gen. ix, 26, 27.

† Gen. xx, 7.

the New Testament it occupies a subordinate position.

Now if, when all men enjoyed the primitive religion, previous to the call of Abraham, God had commissioned some to predict the future, it was perfectly natural for pretended prophets to arise among the heathen nations, after they had gradually lapsed from the true religion into idolatry. A perfect parallel to this is seen in the pretended miracles and prophecies of the Papal Church. From this fact some have endeavoured to throw discredit on Scripture prophecy, which effort betrays lamentable ignorance or wickedness. What good thing has not been imitated? Is it wise to refuse to take any money because spurious coin is in circulation? Nay, does not the counterfeit show that there must be some genuine?

The wondrous gift of prophecy bestowed upon the early chosen people of God, the children of Abraham, had been heard of by surrounding nations. Cicero commences his volume, entitled *De Divinatione*, with a statement of this fact:—

“It is an ancient opinion, descended indeed from the heroic ages, and strengthened by the unanimous belief of the Roman people, and of

all nations, that there is exercised among men a kind of communion with God; that is, a presentiment or a knowledge of future things. A glorious thing indeed, and healthful, if it is a fact, and elevating our mortal nature nearest to the Deity. Principally the Assyrians, on account of the extended plains which they inhabit, allowing the heavens to be presented on every side, have observed the passages and motions of the stars, and have recorded what was thus signified to every man."

• The Jews were known to the Romans as Assyrians; and it is likely that the fact of divine inspiration is dimly represented in the above opinion.

With reference to ancient prophets, we are by no means certain that there were not some, genuinely inspired, whose predictions are not recorded in the Bible, and who dwelt out of Judea. Job was not an Israelite; Balaam was certainly a prophet; and Abimelech and Nebuchadnezzar were favoured with divine communications.

The general expectation of a great Deliverer, about the time of Christ's advent, we think cannot rationally be accounted for, but as proceeding from actual, true prophecies, received either

in the earliest ages of the world, or without access to the Jewish Scriptures.

The natives of Hindostan cherished this expectation, and frequent mention of it is made in their Puranas or sacred books. Indeed, the emperor of India, like Herod, uneasy at these prophecies, sent emissaries to find the child and destroy him. For a full statement of this subject, see Captain F. Wilford's article on the Origin and Decline of the Christian Religion in India, Asiatic Researches, vol. x, p. 27.

The wise men of the East doubtless visited Bethlehem under the influence of this prophecy. The Chinese also had such a prophecy; and so vivid was their expectation of the Messiah, "the Great Saint, who," as Confucius says, "was to appear in the West," that they too sent envoys to hail the Redeemer.\* That the Romans had a collection of remarkable prophecies, called the Sibylline Books, is a well-attested historical fact. They were destroyed by fire about a century before Christ, the later books being forgeries; but some extracts remain, and none so remarkable as the one woven into the fourth eclogue of Virgil, beautifully translated by Pope, and by him entitled *The Messiah*.

\*See Schlegel's *Philosophy of History*, vol. i, p. 175.

In the writings of Cicero (*Ciceronis Fragmenta*, vol. xv, p. 52. Ed. Maii) is preserved a prediction, which, to say the least, applies beautifully and forcibly to our own country and Washington. The literal translation of it is as follows:—

“Far beyond the ocean, if we may credit the Sibylline Books, there shall be discovered, many centuries hence, a large and opulent continent; and in it shall arise a man, brave and wise, who shall deliver by his counsel and arms his country from oppressive servitude, and shall found a republic under happy auspices, very like our own in origin and other particulars: and this man, good gods! shall be much and deservedly preferred to Brutus and Camillus.”

This prophecy did not escape the notice of Attius, who, in his work entitled *Nyctegresia*, adorned the old oracle with poetic numbers.

False prophets among the heathen were imitators, and gradually degenerated into jugglers and necromancers,—a class of people not legally tolerated among the Israelites. Avarice was their ruling passion, and skilful deception their chief reliance. A few chance predictions, bearing every mark of mere happy conjectures, are all that is left to their credit, while many posi-

tive falsehoods and intentional ambiguities, to say nothing of their more glaring vices, are recorded against them by the historians of their day.

The sibyls or priestesses, who pretended to be able to read the future, dwelt in the heathen temples, were propitiated with gifts, and either pretended it, or actually, from physical exhaustion, fell into a sort of mania, in the midst of which they would reply to questions generally in answers obscure and capable of opposite interpretations. They were often bribed, and made use of every secret means to obtain information on the subjects upon which they were consulted; and yet not a single instance is on record of a clear, important prediction uttered by any one of them.

One about to visit a foreign land sought information as to his safety, and received the reply,—“*Ibis, redibis, nunquam, peribis,*”—which may be translated, “You shall go, you shall return never, you shall perish.” By inserting a pause after *return*, it was a promise of safety and success; but by inserting a pause after *never*, it was a prediction of sure destruction. The oracle was sure to be right!

When Croesus intended to make war upon the

Medes and Persians, he consulted the oracle at Delphi as to his success; the answer was, "By passing the river Helys, and fighting with the Persians, a great empire will be ruined." But which empire, his own or the enemy's, the oracle did not deign to designate.

In like manner Pyrrhus, about to attack the Romans, consulted the same oracle and received the following reply: "Aio te, *Æacide*, Romanos vincere posse;" which, translated literally, becomes, "I say that you, O son of *Æacus*, the Romans are able to conquer." But whether the Romans were able to conquer, or Pyrrhus, who could decide?

What man of sense and candour would compare such jugglery with Scripture predictions?

The prophets of the Jews could not prostitute their gift for gain, but for the most part were humble, unassuming, and often poor men. Their faithfulness in reproofing vice often subjected them to persecution, and the apostle graphically says of them: "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented." Their reward in this world is also alluded to by Christ, *Matthew* v, 11, 12.

The primary object of prophecy was to awaken the attention of the people to the will of God, to deter them from sin, and to encourage them in the performance of duty, notwithstanding any difficulties. Another great purpose effected by it is the establishment of the truth of revelation on a basis broad as the earth, and firm as the history of the world.

It would obviously not comport with our design to examine in detail the prophecies of the Bible, but only to explain a few that present marked and strong confirmation of its divine origin. It is said of Ishmael in Genesis xvi, 12, "And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him: and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."

In Genesis xvii, 18, Abraham is represented as praying, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" The answer of God is: "As for Ishmael, I have heard thee. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly: twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation."

Now this prophecy was uttered nearly two thousand years before Christ, and the striking point of it is, that it has been confirmed by the



history of more than three thousand years, and is now confirmed by the modern Arabs; and, moreover, is of such a nature that it would not have been true of any other man or tribe then living, or that has ever lived. A stronger prophecy, therefore, could not be devised or imagined. It is a positive absurdity to suppose that any but the Omniscient Being could have published it.

By Ishmael is to be understood his race, or descendants.

1. We have, first, then designated their character: "He shall be a wild man." As the original gives us to understand, they shall be a race like wild asses.\*

2. We have, second, the numerousness of the race promised. "He shall beget twelve princes." "I will multiply him exceedingly." "I will make him a great nation."

3. We have, third, his permanency and the place of his residence. "He shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."

It is only necessary to assert that these three particulars are amply fulfilled in the Arabs, a portion of whom are the descendants of Ishmael.

\* Literally, "He shall be a wild-ass man."

1. "As wild as an Arab" is a proverb. They have never been at peace with their neighbours, and we may safely say never will be, till the period of this prophecy runs out, absorbed as it will be in the great universal prophecy, which foretells the conversion of the world and the unlimited reign of the Prince of peace. Now, as for many centuries, the Bedouins, doubtless the purest descendants of Ishmael, regard themselves, and are regarded, as a peculiar race, asserting and enjoying a wild independence; in the language of prophecy, "their hands against every man, and every man's hands against them." To adopt their own morality, they do not rob; "they take" or "gain," and travellers must unite in a caravan and arm themselves to cross the desert, their home, without being plundered.

2. The promised increase of the race was rapidly fulfilled. He had twelve sons, princes, whose names are recorded, Gen. xxv, 13-15. The present population of Arabia is estimated at about twelve millions, though how large a portion of them are actually descendants of Ishmael it is impossible to determine.

3. The place of their residence, and their permanence as a people, are designated in the

expression, "He shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." This may be translated, "He shall dwell in the faces of all his brethren," which would simply mean that the Ishmaelites should be *east* of and contiguous to the Jews. Many commentators have supposed that the Ishmaelites are in this prophecy pronounced unconquerable. We do not so understand it, in the full import of the word. They are, however, to dwell in a certain place, and to preserve a certain distinct national character. This always has been verified, and they have never been reduced to servitude so as to lose any of their wild independence. They have escaped or successfully resisted the armies that had conquered all the world besides. The Assyrians, Medes, and Persians, gave up the conquest of Arabia in despair. Alexander the Great was insulted by them, and died when meditating their subjugation; and the iron-armed and iron-hearted Romans never subdued Arabia but in name. Even the sneering Gibbon, after an unworthy attempt to show that Arabia had been conquered, is compelled by historic truth to add, "The body of the nation has escaped the yoke of the most powerful monarchies; the arms of Sesostris and Cyrus, of Pompey and Trajan,

could never achieve the conquest of Arabia; the present sovereign of the Turks may exercise a shadow of jurisdiction, but his pride is reduced to solicit the friendship of a people whom it is dangerous to provoke and fruitless to attack.”\*

With the state of the country in which they live we have nothing to do—none but one instructed by the All-wise Being could have foreseen that the descendants of Ishmael should for successive ages occupy that territory, or forever retain their peculiar character.

The statement of Sir William Jones upon this subject is very explicit:—

“The Arabs have never been entirely subdued, nor has any impression been made upon them, except on their borders; where indeed the Phœnicians, Persians, Ethiopians, Egyptians, and in modern times, the Othman Tartars, have severally acquired settlements; but, with these exceptions, the natives of Hejaz and Yemen have preserved for ages the sole dominion of their deserts and pastures, their mountains and fertile valleys. Thus apart from the rest of mankind, this extraordinary people have retained

\* Decline and Fall of Roman Empire, chapter 1, vol. v, p. 82. Boston edition.

their primitive manners and language, features and character, as long and as remarkably as the Hindoos themselves.\*

The next important prophecy which our design leads us to examine, is the speech of dying Jacob. If a dying man is blest with reason, we instinctively attribute great importance to his words. We hang over his couch, and breathlessly listen to the feeble articulations expressing the thoughts and wishes of the spirit just about to stand before God. If ever prophetic words would be indelibly enstamped on the memory, it would be the language of a dying father. Enter then the tent of Jacob, and, drawing aside the curtain, behold the venerable patriarch, supported on his bed, while his twelve sons with their children are gathered kneeling around him. His words come heavily, but to him

—“A thousand years which yet supine  
Lie like the ocean waves ere winds arise,  
Heaving in dark and sullen undulation,  
Float from eternity into those eyes.”

His has been an eventful life. “Few and evil his days have been.” He began his life with deception, and bitterly has he been punished. His loved son, Joseph, was torn from him by

\* Asiatic Researches, vol. ii, p. 3.

his depraved brothers, as he thought by wild beasts, though in it all was exhibited the kind providence of God; afterward he escaped starvation only by perilling the life of his other beloved son, and even that was designed to lead him down to Egypt, where his descendants should be properly trained. But though he sinned, and suffered for his sin, his last years were years of piety; and since he had been called *Israel*, because he had prevailed with God, and his prayers were answered, no crime had stained his life. And now the pious Israel, summoning his last mortal energies, while the Spirit of God strengthens and teaches him, gently places his trembling hand upon the head of his first-born, Reuben. A father's heart was his, and he would fain have blessed him; but he must speak as moved by the Holy Ghost: "*Reuben, thou art my first-born, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power: unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch.*"

This doom, "Thou shalt not excel," was clearly fulfilled in Reuben and his tribe. The oldest son, he might have expected to receive

the preëminence and the double portion ; but the preëminence was given to Judah, and the double portion to Joseph. On leaving Egypt his tribe numbered forty-six thousand five hundred adult males, making it only the seventh tribe in number ; and after a few years, when the census was again taken, it had decreased to forty-three thousand seven hundred and thirty, making it only the ninth ; and subsequently it became in power, and probably in population, the lowest tribe in Israel, and was finally among the first to be carried away captive and lost. Now this did not take place till centuries after even Moses, the writer of this book, died: How could dying Jacob have foreseen it?

The old man now places his trembling hand on his next two sons and exclaims: "*Simeon and Levi are brethren ; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret ; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united ! for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce : and their wrath, for it was cruel : I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.*"

Simeon and Levi had been fierce, turbulent, and ungovernable, and the source of inexpressi-

ble trouble and grief to their father. Even when dying, he was compelled to disavow any participation in their crimes, and to call upon his honour to disclaim all intimacy with them. Behold their punishment. Brothers in crime, they must share the penalty: "I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." Now behold its fulfilment. Long after the death of Jacob, the tribe of Simeon, once numbering fifty-nine thousand three hundred men, was reduced, no doubt on account of their wickedness, to twenty-two thousand, losing more than any other tribe; and still further, after the death of Moses, under Joshua, by apparent accident, they had no exclusive territory assigned to them in the apportionment of Canaan; but as the territory of Judah was too large for that tribe, they were sent to occupy a part of Judah. This we learn from Joshua xix, 1-9. But afterward the Judahites reoccupied at least a part of this, certainly the cities Beersheba and Ziklag. 1 Sam. xxvii, 6; 2 Sam. xxiv, 7. Thus were they in fact "*divided and scattered.*" Who could have foreseen it?

Levi also received the accomplishment of the prophecy in a different and very remarkable way. His descendants were all chosen as priests,



and had their cities appointed in all parts of Israel; nor did they solely occupy even these. They were *divided and scattered*, but perhaps not thus cursed.

No doubt, wearied with predicting evil, the old man with a smile of gladness lifted his hands from Simeon and Levi, and placed them upon their own brother Judah. He was the man who had induced his brethren to sell Joseph rather than to slay him; he was the man that afterward offered to be a slave for life to deliver his brother Benjamin; and for these traits he was justly beloved.

The name Judah signifies *praise*. "*Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall PRAISE; thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee.*"

The point of this and the subsequent blessing is, that Judah should be the ruler, having the supreme authority, receiving the preëminence due to Reuben. Hence he is compared to the king of beasts, the lion. "*Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion: who shall rouse him up?*"

The following passage of prophecy is truly re-

markable: "*The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come.*"

To see its force, observe,

1. When the prophecy was uttered Judah had no superior power or dignity. He was a simple private man, the ruler only of his own household; nor did Judah obtain any such power for many generations. Moses, the first ruler of the nation, and the very man who wrote these predictions, (though Jacob uttered them nearly two hundred years before,) was not of the tribe of Judah, but of Levi. Joshua, the next ruler, was of the tribe of Ephraim. Of the fifteen judges of Israel, who ruled the people till they appointed a king, only three were of Judah; and what is the most remarkable of all, the first king of the nation, Saul, was not of Judah, but of Benjamin. So slow was the fulfilment of this prophecy, and so absolutely beyond even the conjecture of a mortal mind. But

"God is his own interpreter,  
And he will make it plain."

About five hundred years after the prediction was uttered, *David* was appointed king, and Judah began to rule. Dying Jacob had said, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah:" it

was five centuries before Judah grasped any sceptre, or perhaps thought of doing so, and even then did it without any reference to the prediction; but, having grasped it, it never departed till Shiloh came.

2. Observe, secondly, that the word sceptre implies a superiority in the power of government, to be enjoyed only over his brethren, the other Israelites; and though subsequently Judah himself was carried for a time into captivity, yet even there the sceptre was still held. During their captivities the Jews retained their religion, and many of their civil institutions.\* The sceptre may be said to have passed away from Judah, and his lawgivers to have ceased, when Herod the Great died, who was the last man that exhibited any independence as the king of the Jews. His son Archelaus was indeed ethnarch under the Romans nine years, and then deposed, and Judea was henceforth governed by Romans. Now in the last year of Herod the Great, Jesus Christ was born.

3. We understand, then, by Shiloh, the Messiah. The exact meaning of the Hebrew term Shiloh is undetermined; or, rather, it will bear two or three significations. All of these, how-

\* See the books of Daniel and Ezra.

ever, point out the Messiah. The ancient Jews themselves all understood this to foretell the coming of Christ. The Targum of Onkelos was composed by a learned Jew, contemporary with Christ, and is a valuable Jewish commentary on the Pentateuch. That renders this passage as follows: "One having the principality shall not be taken from the house of Judah, nor a scribe from his children's children, until the Messiah come, whose the kingdom is."\*

The Jerusalem Targum, written not earlier than the eighth century after Christ, renders it: "Kings shall not fail from the house of Judah, nor skilful doctors of the law from their children's children, till the time when the King Messiah shall come."†

All the ancient versions, the Septuagint, Syriac, Samaritan, and Arabian, confirm this rendering. How beautifully was this prophecy fulfilled! Christ came when Judah's sceptre departed, and unto him was the gathering of the Gentiles. Jew and Gentile together received him, and were made the sons of God; and the Christian Church became, and is now, the true Israel of Jehovah.

\* Eight Dissertations on Certain Prophetical Passages of Holy Scripture. By George Stanley Faber, B. D. London, 1845. Vol. i, p. 199.

† Id., p. 200.

The rest of this prophecy simply denotes what was amply verified, that the land of Judah should be extremely fertile, so that wine and milk should be as abundant as water. It may also have a typical reference to the sufferings and triumph of Christ.

Zebulun next received the blessing of his father, and many years afterward enjoyed its confirmation. The historian could not more tersely and correctly describe the condition of this tribe, than did the prophet before as yet the tribe existed. "*Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for a haven of ships: and his border shall be unto Zidon.*"

Judah had been compared to a lion. Issachar is now termed an *ass*; not in reproach, but with reference to the strength, and docility, and industry of the tribe.

"*Issachar is a strong ass, crouching down between two burdens: and he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.*"

Wealthy and strong, industrious and cheerful was this tribe, having a goodly heritage. How much their pleasant residence tempted the cupidity of their enemies, we know not; and how

much they were oppressed by tribute, we cannot tell; but doubtless the prediction was amply fulfilled.

The old man then placed his hand upon Dan, and blessed him, pronouncing him too the prince of a tribe, though the son of Bilhah. The word Dan signifies *judge*. "*Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.*" He is then compared to a serpent, an adder, signifying that the tribe should be subtle, and accomplish its purposes more by stratagem than industry. This was confirmed in the character of Samson, and in the transaction related in Judges xviii, 27-29.

The physical strength of the dying patriarch seems here to have failed, and he addresses himself in earnest prayer to God. "*I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.*" His prayer was answered, and his life prolonged yet a few moments, till he could place his hand upon his five remaining sons. His words, however, to all but Joseph are brief.

*Gad* signifies good fortune. He therefore exclaims, "*Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.*" This was accomplished in the repeated contests of this tribe with the surrounding Arabian hordes.

Often overcome, they discomfited their foes at last, though always compelled to be a warlike tribe.

*"Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties;"* all of which was abundantly confirmed.

The blessing pronounced upon Naphtali is in these words: *"Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words;"* which would imply liberty and prosperity. The original, however, will bear the construction given to it by the Septuagint: *"Naphtali is a wide-spread tree, bearing lovely branches."* This would seem to be beautifully expressive of the woodland country, abounding in fruit, which became the portion of this prosperous tribe. This was, some of the time at least, the most numerous tribe of Israel.

The old man now summons his remaining strength to bless his beloved Joseph. Joseph—the greatest man in Egypt next to the king—was kneeling before him like his brethren, to receive his father's dying benediction; and how the patriarch's heart seems to warm with affection as he blesses that beloved son!

*"Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the*

*wall. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob: (from thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel:) even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee, and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb: the blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren."*

The two powerful tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh were descended from Joseph, and fully enjoyed in after years the glowing prophetic blessings pronounced on their common father.

But one son remained, and he, the youngest and the beloved Benjamin, doubtless now expected a delightful prospect; but, alas! the truth was sad, and dying Jacob must speak as moved of God. "*Benjamin shall raven as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.*" The ungovernable temper and ferocity of this tribe rendered



them conspicuous. In civil war they were nearly destroyed, and finally became merged with the tribe of Judah.

We have thus examined this beautiful train of prophecies, and we ask any candid person how this accurate and abundant knowledge of the future could have been obtained but from God? When the coming history of these tribes was announced, the tribes themselves were but single families, presided over by their fathers, yet in Egypt all alike shepherds: when it was written they had not yet received their territory, and the prophecy was not confirmed till centuries after both Jacob and Moses died. In all this behold the omniscience of God!

The dying patriarch, after blessing his sons, had just time to express his last personal wish, that his body might be buried in the same field with his grand-parents, Abraham and Sarah, and his beloved Rebekah and Leah; and then, in the peculiar language of Moses, "he gathered up his feet into the bed," the last struggle went over him, "he yielded up the ghost," or surrendered his spirit to God, "and was gathered unto his people."

He was now in the presence of the sons of

light. God grant that our lives may be like the latter part of Jacob's, and that our last end may be as happy as his! And when we admire the prophetic wisdom God displayed through him, let us also pray for his faith and zeal, that we may prevail too with God, and at last enter the world where "we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known."

## CHAPTER X.

## THE MIRACLES OF THE EXODUS.

THE Old Testament cannot be appreciated without constantly keeping in mind its great plan, or the grand design of the Almighty, the execution of which is detailed in these Scriptures. That design was to reveal the character of God, and the duty and destiny of man, the revelation of which was to be gradual, and not completed until the Messiah should come. From former observations it appears that a revelation, sufficiently clear to make men holy, and to secure their salvation, was given to the whole world in the earliest ages. The idea of the original barbarity, or even ignorance of man, is utterly untenable, both from the Bible and from the scanty records or traditions of antiquity preserved among men. This degrading notion, which cannot be entertained by any person who has examined carefully the subject, has prevailed in modern times, partly from limited observation, and partly from a wild and disgraceful

theory of some infidels of the modern French school. It was also entertained by some ancient infidels among the heathen, such as Lucretius.

It is true that the most enlightened nations of the present age are descended from tribes that were *partially* barbarous, though by no means generally so degraded and ignorant as many have thought. These were gradually improved and civilized, not by their own efforts, but by intercourse with wiser nations. From this historical fact theorists have hastily inferred that other nations and the whole race have passed through the same stages of advancement. This inference, however, is positively false.

Chateaubriand and others have gone still further, and, giving reins to a wild fancy, utterly unobservant of the most ancient history, much of which has been brought to light since they lived, have even taught that man was originally an ape or an orang-outang, and has by degrees become a far more exalted, but, as Rousseau would have us believe, a far less happy beast, a civilized human being. Perhaps there are no limits to fancy, and for diversion it may be proper to indulge it; but when a miscalled philosopher disregards the teachings of facts and

publishes his dreams as truths, or the deductions of reason, he proves himself a knave or a fool.

It is to be lamented that the shallow conclusions of an ignorant, sceptical age have taken so strong a hold upon the common mind as to have given general currency to several phrases founded in false theory and sure to produce false impressions. What means the expression "state of nature," so flippantly employed by many to denote the savage state? If the savage state be the state of nature, or the state in which man most corresponds with the laws of the world in which he is placed, God grant that the world may speedily become savage, and the barbaric millennium soon be ushered in! It should be a constant effort of preachers and teachers, and of all who contribute to make a theory public, to disabuse the minds of the people of this notion, so repugnant to Scripture, and ancient history, and sound philosophy. We speak only of the first men themselves, not of their actual attainments. By experience and observation much has been learned, not by savages, but by those capable of learning. There may be little art, and yet artistic power; industry and application and study, and yet little information. Of the arts and the sciences

men had at first but the rudiments, but they had the capability of rapidly acquiring more.

Of religion too they may be said to have had but the rudiments, but these rudiments were *true*. The ancient Egyptians doubtless believed in one God, the Creator, in man's possession of a soul which is immortal, and in a future resurrection.\* The doctrines of many ancient nations were equally pure.† Indeed, a belief in the existence of one Supreme Being, together with some notion of a Trinity, is apparent in the mythological systems of the Hindoos, Syrians, Chaldeans, Chinese, and the most ancient Greeks, and may be faintly traced even among the ancient Peruvians. For abundant proof of this, we need only consult the writings of Sir William Jones, Cory, Faber, Bryant, Maurice, and others who have investigated the subject.

The custom of offering sacrifices was also universal, and originally was based on the belief that an atonement for sin is required.

There is, however, a tendency to deterioration in morals and religion evinced by all men.

\* Gliddon's *Ancient Egypt, Monuments, Hieroglyphics, &c.*, chap. iii. Illustration N.

† Sixth Discourse of Sir William Jones, *Asiat. Res.*, vol. ii, p. 58; Cory's *Ancient Fragments*, Faber's *Origin of Idolatry*, Bryant's *Mythology*, and Maurice's *Oriental Trinities*.

If we might be allowed to anticipate so much, we would attribute this to the depravity of human nature; but we at present only direct the attention to the historical fact. We by no means suppose that when Abraham was called, or centuries later, the whole world had grossly and far apostatized from the truth. Abraham might have found many Melchisedeks had he journeyed far enough; and the original light has not even yet become wholly darkness.\*

Now God's great object, so far as we can comprehend it, in giving the revelation to man which we term the Bible, was to counteract this tendency to deterioration, and to furnish gradual and additional information to men, in order that they might obey him, and become prepared for everlasting felicity.

Man is so constituted that he will worship; hence he has been called "the religious animal." It has been true of all ages and nations, ancient and modern, and is a well-established fact. Indeed, in one or two instances, small tribes have been found in which this tendency has been almost smothered or undeveloped; but this is by common consent regarded as the strongest possible evidence of degradation ap-

\* See Description of the Seeks, *Asiat. Res.*, vol. i, p. 289.

proximating even to brutality. It may be asserted that the power of ratiocination is not more essentially human than is a disposition to religious worship.

Now the worship of false gods is a positive evil, an actual curse to the worshipper. This grows out of the fact, that however pure and holy these gods may have been imagined to be by their first worshippers, so great is the tendency to deterioration above referred to, that invariably idolatry becomes the fruitful parent of actual vice. The gods by degrees become incarnations of partiality, revenge, malice, and lust, and the worshippers gradually partake of their character. There may be a transient rebellion occasionally against this influence, and some few reactions; but the general and inevitable tendency is this way. Even where acknowledged demons have been worshipped, the worshippers have absorbed the spirit of the devils to whom they sacrificed, and become the children of the monsters whom they hated. The voice of heathenism is unanimous on this point, and it is entirely superfluous to illustrate it at any length. What was the character of the worshippers of Moloch, Baal, Bacchus, and Venus? Under the influence of the worship of



the latter, Corinth became a city of prostitutes. Greece and Rome, in their palmyest days, were hot-beds of violence and vice, not resisted, but fostered and stimulated by their religious worship. No person who has not read the writings of Petronius, Martial, and other eye-witnesses of this corruption, can imagine it. Suffice it to say, that the picture given by Paul in the latter part of the first chapter of Romans is not overdrawn. Seneca said, "Wickedness so stalks abroad in public, and so prevails in every breast, that innocence is not merely rare, *it does not exist.*"\* Quintus Curtius says of Babylon, that nothing could be more corrupt than its morals. Money dissolved every tie, whether of kindred, respect, or esteem. The Babylonians were greatly given to wine, and the enjoyments which accompany inebriety. Women were present at their convivialities, first with some degree of propriety; but growing worse and worse by degrees, ended by throwing off at once their modesty and their clothing.† Similar is the effect of heathen worship in modern times.

Now if God has any love for man; if virtue is preferable to vice; if man would be benefitted

\* De Ira, l. ii, c. 8.

† De Rebus Gestis Alexandri, liber v, cap. 1, § 36, &c.

and blest by sobriety and rectitude, then it is evident that the Almighty would grant to man some restraining influence mightier than his own reason and conscience. This has been afforded in the Bible. And from the above facts, well considered, all must acknowledge the necessity of a Bible.

Supposing it to be granted that a revelation is necessary, we assert that it could not be given in any way but by miracles. Men may reason metaphysically about miracles, their impossibility, their failure to convict, and any other fancied deficiency about them: the stanch common sense of any man who possesses it teaches him at once that a miracle will convince a witness of supernatural power, and that nothing else will. There is not a false religion that does not rest upon pretended miracles; and that is the only true religion that is based on *real miracles*. That the relation of miracles, then, is found in the Bible is not surprising, but inevitable. Without them it would be like a fabric without foundation. We must put these relations to the test, and if they endure it, well.

In the first part of the Book of Exodus we have a relation of a wonderful series of miracles, which we propose now briefly to examine.

But before examining them, we must beg the reader to bear in mind the object of the Almighty in bringing the children of Abraham into Egypt,—that a compact and numerous nation might be provided. Now they were to escape from Egypt. Now we doubt not that God might have caused the Egyptians willingly, and on the most amicable terms, to send the Israelites away; and we conceive that the reason why he did not is of great importance, and should not be overlooked.

If the Israelites had departed in peace and quiet, they would not have been so strongly bound together as a people. Their common danger and common rescue cemented their hearts together in a firm national feeling.

Again, if they had gone out in peace, they would not have been so well prepared for the self-denial and hardships before them. They would have longed for Egypt; they would have been afflicted with a universal home-sickness, and returned to the land and the practices of these idolaters. This consideration affords a key to the mystery of God's hardening the heart of Pharaoh. The object of those miracles was *not to benefit the Egyptians*, nor have we any reason to believe, wonderful as it may appear,

that they were benefitted. They were designed to instruct, and consolidate into a nation, fearing God, the Israelites. One miracle would not answer; a series was necessary. Therefore God hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and probably also the hearts of the whole Egyptian nation. Not that he induced them to sin, but he did not allow them at first to become convicted by the miracles that it was their duty to allow the Israelites to depart. This was not the object of the miracles at first. He gave the Egyptians a stubborn resistance to conviction, nor did he allow them to become convinced till the miracles were completed; and then it was through terror, not through a sense of duty, that they yielded. Now if God actually hardened the heart of Pharaoh, (and we have no doubt that he did,) it was a *part of the miracle*, and for it Pharaoh was not accountable, nor responsible, nor guilty; and his punishment at last was not for his supernatural hardness of heart, but for his guilt previous to or independent of that hardness.

To my mind, the hardness of heart in Pharaoh and his counsellors appears as *miraculous* as any part of the narration, and I believe it to have been *supernatural*, and not a part of their

moral character for which they were responsible. To infer from this *miraculous* account what God's *general* plan is in the treatment of responsible beings, is positively absurd. The doctrine of Paul, in the ninth chapter of Romans, is, that if God sees fit to use a sinner in this world, before he assigns him his final doom, to show forth his power, he has a right to do it; and this does not infringe upon men's free agency, nor upon abstract justice: it is only making some sinners, before the final judgment, subserve the same purpose as all such will after the judgment.

Now the miracles of Egypt were eminently calculated to prepare the Israelites to become God's peculiar people, and to receive the revelation ultimately designed for the whole world. This object was effected, first, by their deliverance; and, second, by weaning their affections from the idols of Egypt.

Let us examine this last point.

The magicians, or religious teachers of Egypt, were compelled to engage in a contest with Moses, the religious teacher of Israel. The gods of Egypt and the God of Israel are in conflict.

From this we see also why the magicians were allowed measurably to succeed; it was that the

contest might be more convincing, and this was a part of the miracle. Their apparent success rendered their discomfiture the more apparent, and was of such a peculiar character as to rebound eminently to the glory of God. The attributing of their partial success to *demons* does not remove any difficulty, for demons are as much under the control of God as men. We believe that God himself created the serpents, and the blood, and the frogs, which sprung from the magicians' efforts, as well as those which followed the commandment of Moses; and that for the express purpose of demonstrating to the Israelites—not to the Egyptians—the superiority of the God of Moses to the gods of the magicians. The same demonstration was witnessed by the Egyptians, but not felt, for their *hearts were hardened*; and this was a *part* of the *miracle*.

Whether the magicians succeeded mediately through the influence of demons, or not, is a matter of no consequence. The idea of Drs. Farmer, Bush, and others, that the magicians did not succeed in their efforts, springs from a "rationalistic" interpretation of Scripture language, which we believe to be utterly untenable, forced, and dangerous. The next step would be

to assert that Moses did not succeed; and this might with as much propriety be maintained.

1. The first miracle was the destruction of the magicians' serpents by Moses's serpent, which demonstrated to the Israelites that the serpents which the Egyptians worshipped were not able to save themselves before the God of Moses, and therefore it would be folly to worship them instead of God. Now this demonstration could not have been afforded unless the magicians' rods had been changed into serpents at the will of the magicians themselves. The magicians succeeded, indeed, but it was only to be put to shame.

2. By the second miracle, the water of the Nile was changed into blood, at the instance of Moses calling upon God. Now the Israelites knew that the Egyptians worshipped that river, and esteemed even some of its fishes sacred: when, therefore, they saw its pure water made filthy, and its fishes dying, they acknowledged the superiority of Jehovah.

But the magicians also were allowed to change a limited quantity of water into blood. This was designed to keep the contest for a time in suspense, and to give occasion for further and more convincing displays of power before the

Israelites; while, at the same time, it showed the inferiority of the gods of Egypt, and compelled the magicians, so far as they did manifest any power, to exert it *against themselves*.

3. The third miracle was designed to deepen the same impression. A veneration for the Nile was the strongest feeling of an Egyptian; and the Israelites were permitted to see how completely the Nile was under the power of God. Frogs, therefore, issued from its waters, at the command of Moses, and became an intolerable plague to their worshippers. The deluded magicians were again permitted, on a limited scale, to *add* to their own discomfiture and shame, by increasing, to a small degree, their own curse.

By this time the Israelites must have begun to despise the magicians, and to see that they too were directed by the God of Israel, or if they had independent power they would not have *aped Moses*, but stretched forth their hands and *cleansed* the Nile, and banished the frogs. At the instance of Moses, not the magicians, the frogs retired, and Pharaoh hardened his heart.

4. The fourth miracle was the plague of lice, which severely and triumphantly established the inferiority, or rather the absolute nothingness, of



the Egyptian gods. These insects were considered abominable to their gods, and their priests wore linen clothing, and shaved their heads at least every third day, lest such a profanation should be permitted as to harbour one of these vermin. Now every Egyptian, man and beast, sacred and common, was covered with them.

The foolish magicians stretched forth their rods, hoping, if they could not *destroy* the vermin, at least to *add a few more*; but it was enough: the contest between them and Moses had been sufficiently prolonged,—nothing could be gained even by compelling them to add to their shame: therefore “they could not.” *God gave them no more power*; and they made no exertion afterward, and were compelled, perhaps mechanically, to add, “This is the finger of God!”

5. The fifth miracle was the plague of flies. By these insects the Egyptians were usually much troubled in the summer, and the departure of the swarms was attributed to the influence of their fly-god Beelzebub. The flies then miraculously returning, in winter, at the command of Moses, destroyed the confidence of the *Israelites* in this idol.

6. The custom of worshipping idols in the form

of beasts, and of actually considering some beasts sacred, is one of the most astonishing exhibitions of superstition ever witnessed. Such, however, was the custom of the Egyptians, and it had led to the most revolting vice ever practised among men.

The sixth miracle inflicted the disease of murrain upon all their cattle, including their sacred bull, and ram, and heifer, and goat, and others, and must have demonstrated the power of Jehovah.

It is exceedingly astonishing that after this the Israelites themselves, when Moses was absent, should have made "two golden calves," and exclaimed, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of Egypt." But if such actually was their crime, what would have been their attachment to Egyptian folly but for this wonderful series of miracles! There are no prejudices more tenacious in their hold upon the heart than the follies of superstition. For a proof of this we need only refer to some remnants of pagan observances still existing among even well-informed persons in the heart of the most enlightened Christian communities.

7. The seventh miracle is supposed to have been aimed at a superstitious ceremony of the Egyptians, which never could have been resorted

to without demoniac feelings and intense excitement. They sometimes, to propitiate Typhon, or the devil, murdered human beings as sacrifices, and believed that the ashes of these burned victims, sprinkled in the air, would please the demon, and remove pestilence or any other curse. Moses, therefore, grasped some ashes, perhaps from the very altar upon which human sacrifices had bled, and scattered it abroad; when lo! instead of purity, the God of heaven inflicted upon man and beast boils and blains, from which neither king nor priest could escape.

8. The eighth miracle was hail falling in an unusual season of the year, and with such force as to demonstrate that the gods, which the Egyptians believed had control over the elements, had no power and no existence.

9. Still another idol remained to be vanquished among those who had "gods many and lords many,"—namely, Serapis, the controller of the locusts. To demonstrate his nothingness, Moses stretched forth his hand, and locusts came and covered and devoured every green thing. This would seem to have been enough; but the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, which, we repeat, was an essential and very remarkable element of the miracle.

The Israelites were doubtless satisfied, and had they been called upon would have exclaimed, with one voice, "The Lord he is God, the Lord he is God!" but one demonstration of the omnipotence of Jehovah, the most convincing imaginable, was yet to be afforded. It is well known that the Egyptians worshipped the sun and moon as deities: what must have been their terror, and how evident their folly to the Israelites, when the sun and moon and stars were all at once concealed, and a darkness that might be felt covered the land for three days and nights! This was enough; their idols were degraded in the eyes of the Israelites, and now the time of their deliverance was near.

But it was not fitting that they who had been scourged without cause, and their helpless infants slain, should depart without witnessing the *retribution* of Jehovah. From even that a lesson was to be learned, and a lesson of such importance that it should be called to remembrance by a strange ceremony, to be observed annually forever. The angel of the Lord "passed over" the houses of the Israelites, duly designated, and slew in one night the first-born of man and beast in Egypt. Not till then was a sincere consent to depart given to Moses and his

people; and this consent sprung from *terror*, and not from a conviction of the power of Jehovah,\* and the Israelites were hurriedly thrust away, laden with treasure, which the Egyptians voluntarily bestowed upon them. For though it is said that the Israelites "*borrowed*" these treasures, we cannot suppose that they did not by this time understand that the Israelites contemplated no return to Egypt, and they gave them this treasure.

Thus were the Israelites severed from among

° This is a key to the whole subject, and must not be overlooked. When Naaman, the Syrian, was cured of his leprosy, he *believed in God*; the Philistines, seeing the miracles attending their possession of the ark of the covenant, *believed in God*; but Pharaoh, immediately after Moses departed, *pursued him*. It is evident, both from the Bible and from the ancient history of Egypt, that the Egyptians were not convinced of their own folly. They continued to worship serpents, and the Nile, and Serapis, and beasts, and the sun and moon. Now this cannot be accounted for on the common principles of mental philosophy. It is not in the power of man to resist such evidence. The mind—not necessarily the heart—must be influenced by such demonstration. But God *hardened Pharaoh's heart*, and the hearts of his people. They were *left precisely as if there had been no miracle*. The miracles were not designed for them, and their guilt or innocence was not affected merely by them. This is the solution of the sixteenth verse of the ninth chapter of Exodus, so appropriately quoted by Paul in the ninth chapter of Romans.

When commentators remark upon the convincing effect of these miracles *upon the Egyptians*, they entirely mistake the plan of Jehovah, and the object of these signal displays.

the nations of the earth. As far as possible, without absolutely destroying free agency, which God will not do, their minds were divested of all idolatrous influence. Though educated in the very nursery of superstition, they had learned to despise all idols, and to fear only God. These miracles, then, appear no longer *wonderful*; they are consistent and intelligible, and we adore the wisdom of God as manifested in their exhibition. Quite natural was it therefore for Jethro—the father-in-law of Moses—to exclaim, “Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods; for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly, he was above them.” Exodus xviii, 11. This was but an echo of the belief of every child of Abraham, though the Egyptians still remained robed in spiritual darkness.

The pursuit of the Israelites by Pharaoh, and the miraculous dividing and returning of the Red Sea, are in such perfect keeping with the previous history as to need no particular notice.

It would comport with our design now to show any historical confirmation of these miracles which may be extant. The history of ancient Egypt, though it has occupied the attention of many learned men, is involved in obscurity and very scanty. The only Egyptian account

of the origin of the Israelitēs is evidently distorted and partial, as might be expected.\* Several writers, who lived many centuries after these events, relate or refer to them; but the source of their information is unknown.

A singular custom is mentioned by Epiphanius, as prevailing among the Egyptians, of marking their trees, houses, and lands, and sheep, with *red*, the day of the year before the Jewish pass-over; which must have proceeded from a fear lest the same plague should come upon them as was inflicted upon their forefathers.†

Diodorus Siculus, who wrote a few years before Christ, relates a tradition prevailing among the inhabitants residing on the shore of the Red Sea, to the effect that many years ago the waters of the sea were divided so that the bottom appeared, and afterward returned.‡

But the principal historical confirmation is found in the history of the Israelites, who could never have been made to believe the account, had it not been true; and especially in the remarkable ceremony of the passover, which is a perpetual monument or record of these facts, and which could have had no other origin.

\* Josephus contra Appion, lib. i, ch. 26, 27.

† Allix's Reflections, part ii, ch. 3. ‡ Diod. Sic., lib. iii, p. 122.

## CHAPTER XI.

## BEAUTY AND SCOPE OF THE LAWS OF MOSES.

WE have already noticed the general tendency to idolatry and wickedness in all the human race; and the plan of God to resist this, by selecting one nation to receive a special revelation, which, at a subsequent period, was to be enlarged and published to all mankind. We have shown how and why this nation was selected; and how, by stupendous miracles, it was delivered from Egyptian bondage.

We purpose now to proceed with their history, and exhibit the reasonableness and object of God's dealings with them.

We must, however, be careful to keep in mind the peculiar character of this people. They constitute a theocracy. Though they have their human leader, and elders, and magistrates, they are directly, through them, amenable to God, and by him governed. Their mission is not conquest, nor national prosperity; but to receive and exhibit religion. They are a nation of



*pupils*, to be taught of God, and from them are to come teachers to enlighten the rest of the world, through all successive ages.

Behold them, then, in that wilderness between Egypt and Canaan, collected together near the base of Mount Sinai. They have already been taught the power of Jehovah, and the worthlessness of idols; but much more remains for them to learn. They must now be made to perceive the holiness of God, so that they may have a reverence for him; the justice of God, so that they may fear to do evil; the mercy of God, so that they may not despair. They must also be moulded into a nation, and receive a body of laws, and a system of jurisprudence; and, finally, there must be established among them some institutions that shall operate as a perpetual bulwark against the torrent of idolatrous influence that shall set in upon them from all surrounding nations. The work, then, before God at this juncture is, first, to reveal his own character more fully; secondly, to give his people a system of government; and, thirdly, so to blend their government and religion together that they shall mutually strengthen and sustain each other.

How does God accomplish these distinct ob-

jects in one plan? Not by employing Moses as a preacher, to explain his character and will. Moses was doubtless an eloquent man, but his eloquence was not equal to such a task. Language could not with sufficient vividness convey these truths. A system of *representative action* must be resorted to for this purpose. Symbolic action, or ceremony, will impress thoughts far more distinctly upon the mind than language, especially to those whose minds have not been highly cultivated and developed. We teach children by pictures: we are ourselves more impressed by witnessing an action than by hearing it described. A *ceremony* takes a deeper hold upon the heart than a *sentence*. There is a difficulty almost insuperable about awakening in the mind of any one, for the first time, an idea of holiness. Missionaries complain that they cannot find in heathen languages a word expressive of this thought; and they are obliged to use our word, or invent a new one: and it seems at first absolutely impossible to introduce this thought into a heathen mind.

Now God's method of awakening this thought in the minds of his people was to issue a command to them to *wash their clothes*: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and

sanctify them to-day and to-morrow; and let them *wash their clothes*." Now this washing of the clothes was designed to communicate to them the thought, that God demands *cleanliness*, not merely of the body, but of the soul; and the easy and natural transference of this idea from the body to the soul awakens the thought of personal holiness, and of the holiness of God, who makes the demand. Now this one point explains many other requirements of God, which, to ignorant and flippant opposers of the Bible, appear strange and undignified.

A great part of the Mosaic law was intended to keep alive in the minds of the Israelites and their children the necessity of cleanliness, or holiness, if they would worship God acceptably. The only proper way to examine any part of the Bible is to inquire what God designs to teach by this passage; and though the *instrument* may be trivial or mean, the *thought* will always be found grand, and worthy of its Author. The frequent washings required by the Jewish law, all had this design,—to teach that God hates *spiritual* defilement, aptly symbolized by bodily defilement. This thought is the foundation of the Christian ceremony of baptism, which only symbolizes the washing of the soul by the sanc-

tifying Spirit of God. The very word in the Hebrew language, which signifies *to be holy*, originally meant *to be clean*; and it was by symbolic action that the Hebrews first acquired this central idea of religion.\*

The holiness of God, and the holiness which he demands in men, is still further illustrated in the Jewish law by the distinction established between clean and unclean beasts. We do not deny that there may be *some* foundation for this distinction in the nature of these beasts, in their suitableness for food, physiologically, in the climate of Palestine; and we do not deny that some reference may have been made in this distinction to the customs of some heathen nations, which idolatrous customs were effectively excluded from Palestine by this distinction; still we believe that the distinction was principally arbitrary, and designed to teach that God is *holy*, and therefore will not be pleased with every animal as a sacrifice, but only with the *clean*; and also that the Israelites should be holy, and not partake of all food indiscriminately, but only the clean.

\* קָדַשׁ, 1. To be *pure*; 2. To be spiritually clean; translated into Greek by *αγιος*, freed from earth, or unearthly, sacred, in a word, *holy*.

Let it be understood, then, that by this and by all similar provisions, by compelling the priests to wash, the people to wash, the camp to be cleansed, and purity generally to be sought, and especially in religious worship, an idea of God's holiness was powerfully impressed upon the mind: and how large a portion of the Jewish law is thus elucidated!

We do not suppose that it was by symbol alone that God taught the Israelites,—far from it; symbol was but the commencement, and a very subordinate part, of his revelation. After a glimmering idea of his holiness and power had been awakened by their ceremonies, and by his miracles, he published to them the *ten commandments*; and this decalogue bears the impress of divinity,—it carries evidence of its origin with it. How could Moses have originated that comprehensive moral law, the truth and perfectness of which all succeeding ages, down to the present, have acknowledged? We challenge uninspired literature to furnish its equal. We maintain that in that age of the world, according to the laws that govern mind, it would be preposterous to suppose that a mere man, like Moses, could have devised the ten commandments. Moses was, indeed, “learned

in all the wisdom of the Egyptians ;” but whence did he learn the character of the one supreme God? Not, certainly, from that people who worshipped even the cattle and the vegetables! Whence did he learn the impropriety of making images of God for worship? Not, certainly, from that people who might be distinctively styled the picture-making nation; who not only gave their gods a shape, for purposes of worship, but represented them in their writings by hieroglyphics. From no human source could Moses have acquired the thoughts embodied in the Decalogue; and that he originated them no man of reason could believe. History informs us that they were communicated to him by Jehovah, and this only accords to them their worthy origin.

To awaken an idea of his justice in the minds of the Israelites, God enacted, through Moses, strict laws against sin of every description; and affixed to the violation of these laws severe punishment. The severity of the punishment of some peculiar crimes, under the Mosaic law, such as blasphemy, breaking the Sabbath, disobedience to parents, and some others, was designed to show God’s own authority, his abhorrence of impiety, and his inexorable demand

of righteousness in his children. Viewed in this light, they are not harsh, nor do they betray, in any degree, vindictiveness nor tyranny. Had they been more lenient they would not have accomplished their purpose, which was a good one, and indispensable in the great design.

The whole system of sacrifices was designed to show that sin against God demands an expiation, and that only under certain conditions can it be forgiven. We accordingly find in the history of the Israelites, that no sooner had they escaped from Egypt, and received the moral law, and certain other enactments that were necessary to insure order among them as a people, than Moses was commanded to make suitable preparations for the offering up of sacrifices. These preparations were costly and extensive, and the directions given seem to be almost tediously minute; but the careful reader will perceive that all the directions harmonize with the one purpose of awakening a reverence for God. These sacrifices were to be offered by the whole nation, through their priests, by families, and by individuals. They were to be offered for general sinfulness, for special transgressions, and for the omission of duty. The blood of the animal, was to be shed; and they were taught to

believe that having thus testified their own abhorrence of sin, this sin was expiated, and God did forgive. Now, when the Israelite brought the animal to the appointed place, and was compelled to place his hands upon it, and confess, in these or similar words, "O God, I have sinned; I have done perversely; I have trespassed before thee: lo! now I repent, I am truly sorry; let, then this victim be my expiation:" and when he saw that animal slain, and its smoke ascending from the burning pile, must he not have been impressed with the evil of sin, and the necessity of an expiation? This ceremony was designed to awaken thought, and that thought it did awaken. It was designed to show both the justice and mercy of God.

It does not comport with our plan, at present, further to examine this subject, and we will therefore only remark that all that minuteness of legislation concerning sacrifices, found in the Old Testament, only shows how careful the Almighty was, thus by *representative action*, to instil into the minds of men some of the most refined and exalted conceptions of which our souls are capable: and as these were requirements binding upon all the people, and for future times, provision was thus made that



the Israelites should always have just conceptions of God.

There is indeed a higher and more convincing evidence of the wisdom and divinity of all these requirements, in the fact that they are together a grand system of types, prophetic of, and fulfilled in, the life and death of our adorable Saviour. But for a portrayal of this interesting subject we must refer to treatises specially devoted to that department.

We have now seen how God awakened in the Israelites some great religious thoughts: his object was also to give them a government as a nation. Upon the peculiar national laws of the Israelites we would simply remark, that so far as they relate merely to morality, and national safety, and public good, they are wise, healthful, and complete. No heathen lawgiver has condensed so much into so small a compass; and these laws were not mere copies of or variations from a previous code. They could not have been written by Moses unaided. We would also observe that these laws are known to have been, in many respects, directly opposite to the customs of the Egyptians, from whom the Israelites had lately been separated; and opposed to the customs of the tribes whom the Israelites

were to dispossess. And this leads us to examine the last object which God had in the Hebrew theocracy, namely: the Israelites were to be so governed as to be effectually preserved from the idolatry of surrounding nations. This was of paramount importance. If this end were not gained, the object of the Almighty would fail. Now, to accomplish this would have been beyond the power of a human legislator. It was to make the Israelites an exception to the whole world. It was to eradicate and repel superstition. It was to expose them to the hatred of others. It was to deprive them of unholy, but, in other nations, common indulgences. In fine, it was to make the Israelites, while they proved faithful, a *perpetual miracle*. This was the object of God, and it was accomplished. The Israelites did indeed become idolaters, but not universally. There were always prophets and priests, and a remnant who bowed not their knees to Baal, nor any other idol. God's plan was carried out by those few as effectively as it could have been by a nation. The knowledge of the true God was kept in the world, and the successive events of his revelation followed in due order.

This design of God elucidates many of the

Mosaic laws which otherwise might appear strange, if not frivolous. Thus, in the twenty-third chapter of Exodus, it is enacted, "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk." This may be designed to teach the beauty of mercy, in opposition to cruelty; but when we learn that it was the custom of the surrounding heathen to boil a kid in the milk of the dam, and then with magical incantation to go around the garden or farm, and sprinkle the trees or plants, to make them more fruitful, we can but imagine that this law was aimed against that foolish superstition.

There is also a law, in the nineteenth chapter of Leviticus, as follows: "Ye shall not round the corners of your heads; neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard." This also is aimed against a superstitious observance of some idolaters, one of the peculiar marks of whom, according to Herodotus, was this custom, forbidden by this special law.

Another instance of a special enactment, in this case indirectly designed to prevent idolatry, is found in the law requiring a person who bound himself to be a slave for life, to have his ears bored through with an awl. Now, all the idolaters around the Jews were accustomed to

wear in their ears amulets, or charmed rings, as they considered them, by which, consecrated to their gods, they expected to be preserved from evil. How effectively did Moses aim a death-blow at this folly, by making the ear bored a mark of a slave!\*

We might specify other instances; but these must suffice. A complete examination of the Mosaic law would require a volume,—its great plan we wish only to present. The more it is studied, the more evident will its wisdom appear. All its minute requirements harmonize with and are necessary to its great purpose, and are worthy of the source whence they sprung,—the wisdom and mercy of Jehovah, our God, and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Those laws still exist. The enactments which expressed the abstract duty of man to God, and of man to man, are still in force. The ceremonial law has been fulfilled in Christ, and is no longer obligatory. It was a schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ; but now we have the great Teacher. The civil law has passed away with the nation, and will never be revived; but the

\* See Witsins's *Economy of the Covenants*. London: T. Tegg and Son. 1837. Vol. ii, p. 381.

moral law was observed before it was here enacted; it is a transcript of God's will, and must be binding as long as the earth shall stand, or even man exist.

Our argument upon the Mosaic law may be summed up briefly as follows:—

1. Its civil requirements are just, comprehensive, and admirable, such as no mere man like Moses could have devised at once, and, if of human origin, would have required years for their composition, like other human laws, enacted successively, as circumstances should have required them. But, given in the infancy of a nation, by a man occupied with the care of government, they demand our belief in his supernatural direction.

2. The ceremonial law of Moses, in all its minute requirements, exhibits to us one prevailing purpose, namely, to communicate just and exalted conceptions of God; and also to repel and render ridiculous all heathen superstitions and worship.

3. The Mosaic law, as a whole, is an admirable composition; in every respect perfect, and worthy of its avowed author, the God of Israel and the Creator of the world. We have pronounced it *perfect*, because it was perfectly

adapted to its holy object; and yet we believe that as the human race has advanced, the former dispensation has been superseded by a broader and higher manifestation of God's will, in the Christian dispensation.

## CHAPTER XII.

THE GREAT COMMISSION AND HISTORY OF THE  
ISRAELITES.

WE have examined, to some extent, the laws of Moses, and also his prophecies; we propose now to consider his great commission, and, more particularly, the narrative of the early history of the Israelites.

It is certain that the Israelites were commanded by Jehovah to exterminate, by fire and sword, the Canaanites. They were commanded to wage against them an offensive and a destructive war. They were not to spare, but utterly to remove the population from the face of the earth. Such was the exact tenor of their commission; yet it must be acknowledged that it was known to Jehovah from the beginning that these commands, in all their rigorousness, would not be speedily and fully executed. A portion only of the Canaanites were destroyed; and this, we may infer, was the original design of Jehovah.

Many have supposed that a command to wage an exterminating war is inconsistent with the mercy of God, and cannot therefore be credited. Obviously it is our duty to examine this subject carefully, and not to allow a first and perhaps erroneous impression to mislead us.

God has a right to remove from this world an individual or a nation whenever, in his wisdom, he deems it right. So far, then, as the *death* of the Canaanites is concerned, it may be that God saw that to be absolutely necessary for the good of the world. God destroyed the antediluvians justly, and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah.

It is evident that the Canaanites were grossly depraved. It is probable that not even Sodom was worse. We have no profane evidence on this point; but the intimations in the Bible are sufficient. In the eighteenth chapter of Leviticus, the sacred writer, after mentioning some of the grossest crimes conceivable, adds, "Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: and the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants."

Again, in the twelfth chapter of Deuteronomy,



the Israelites are solemnly warned not to follow the corrupt and general practices of those nations: "Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them. Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God: for every abomination to the Lord which he hateth have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters have they burnt in the fire to their gods."

Now, considering that this country was the most fit one for the chosen nation to occupy,—that the present inhabitants were a curse, rather than a blessing, to the world,—is it in any way strange that, by fire, or by pestilence, or by some other judgment, God should destroy them, to make room for his people? He had previously told Abraham, that four hundred years from his time must elapse before the Canaanites would be removed.\* And why? "Because their iniquity is not yet full." Having finally filled up their cup of iniquity, the Lord determined to destroy them.

But perhaps the strongest objection, in the minds of many, is to the means employed for the destruction of this wicked and doomed race. That the Israelites—a chosen people of God—

\* Genesis xv, 13-16.

should be commanded, personally, with the sword to slay not only their enemies on the battle-field, but the whole population, is pronounced incredible. To this we reply:—

1. The Israelites did not personally destroy all that were put to death. God repeatedly, by direct judgments, aided in the work.

2. The Israelites were expressly informed that it was not for their accommodation that these people were destroyed, but on account of the deep depravity of the people; and the same destruction was denounced against them, if they should commit the like crimes.

Now, by being the immediate executors of God's judgments, they were most vividly impressed with the indignation of the Almighty against sin, and were most clearly placed without excuse if they should commit such crimes; while they were prevented from becoming blood-thirsty, in their dispositions and general habits, by the humane provisions and character of their laws and worship.

If, then, this subject were left without further remark, we believe that every one who has a just view of the enormity of the sin of idolatry, and the other kindred crimes of the Canaanites, and of the necessity that the Israelites should be

pure from all such crimes, will acknowledge that the command of God for their extirpation was not unmerciful, but right. We should remember that in spite of this command and this summary judgment upon the Canaanites, of which the Israelites were themselves the executors, they did themselves afterward fall into the same crimes, and were punished just as severely. We do firmly believe that in that age of the world no milder means would have checked idolatry among the Israelites, and that the Canaanites did deserve destruction; and that, consequently, the preservation of the Canaanites would have been no blessing to themselves, while it would have been a curse to the Israelites, and a curse to the world.

Here we might let the matter rest; but we have still more to offer. The original inhabitants of Canaan were not all butchered by the Israelites, as some would have us suppose; but only a sufficient number slain, merely to subvert their wicked government, and overthrow their horrid idolatry and criminality. We believe it was all along understood by the Israelites, that if any of the Canaanites would renounce their idolatry, and receive them peaceably, they should not be molested. This language is found in

Scripture: "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it: if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them."\* Now, the Israelites never did destroy the Canaanites utterly, but only broke down their cities and strongholds; and in their palmiest days, under David, Solomon, and other powerful kings, the utmost of their triumph was to suppress idolatry within their limits, and exact tribute of those who on their territory did not become incorporated with them; and therefore it is strongly probable that many of the old inhabitants did actually adopt the worship of Jehovah, and become united with the twelve tribes of Israel.†

We have been thus particular in examining this subject because some, judging from the superior light of the Christian dispensation, and not viewing the whole matter, have hastily pronounced God unjust in commanding the Israelites to destroy the old inhabitants of the land assigned to them.

\* Jeremiah xviii, 7, 8.

† Uriah, the *Hittite*, for instance, was one of the soldiers of David. 2 Sam. xi.

One other subject claims attention. In the course of the Israelitish history various miracles were wrought. This we might expect, for the purpose of producing a strong conviction in the successive generations of that nation, that they actually were a chosen people, commissioned to fulfil an express and important purpose of Jehovah. We have no doubt that miracles themselves are wrought according to a law of God, though they are apparent violations of, or exceptions to, his general laws. We find that they were never wrought needlessly, nor on trivial occasions, nor when the purposes of Jehovah could have been otherwise executed. If the occasion justifies a miracle, strictly speaking, one miracle is no more wonderful than another,—all are direct and unusual exhibitions of the power of God.

These remarks will apply especially to the miracle wrought during the battle of Joshua with the five kings at Gibeon.\* Our first inquiry should be, Did the occasion require an express intervention of Almighty power? This being answered in the affirmative, we maintain that one means of intervention is no more wonderful than another; and God can so control his

\* Joshua x.

own universe, that any miracle shall not interfere with the harmony of his works, or introduce discord into the regular system of nature. Without doubt, the miracle in that case was merely the prolongation of the light of the sun and moon upon that particular spot of the earth the requisite time, while the true motion of the earth was not retarded.

The wonderful prodigies exhibited by the prophets Elijah and Elisha, far later in the history of the Israelites, should be viewed in this light. There was a demand for them: religion was nearly extirpated from the earth. Had not God intervened supernaturally, his chosen people would have been lost,—mingled with the idolaters. He therefore did interfere, and save his people. We may conclude that nothing less than those wonderful manifestations of his power would, at that time, have preserved the true worship upon the earth.

The history of the Israelites, as recorded in the Bible, we do not propose any further to notice, except as it may be necessary to refer to it in the elucidations of a few remarkable prophecies yet to be examined. We would, however, present a few thoughts upon a subject seldom noticed. The Bible is chiefly historical. This

history possesses all the characteristics and evidences of truth. Some of the grand facts related we have already examined, and found them amply attested. There is nothing so capable of being established beyond the reach of doubt as the history of a nation; since the effect of many events is lasting, and perpetual monuments of their occurrence may exist, in names, and in languages, and in institutions, and ceremonies. The history of the United States of America, for instance, can never be forgotten. Though the aborigines of this continent should be swept out of existence, that there once were Indians here, that their tribes were numerous, that their language and customs were peculiar, that they were warlike, and many other particulars concerning them, would forever be known. Aside from the historical accounts, many of our towns and villages, and even states, bear Indian names, and will forever bear them. These names will be everlasting attestations of the truth of history. Tomahawks and other weapons are from time to time discovered, and preserved in museums and cabinets; and various other everlasting testimonials exist.

Can the fact that the white population of this country are of European extraction ever be

doubted? In like manner all the great facts of the Bible history are authenticated. No scholar can doubt that the Israelites were once in Egypt. The feast of the passover still attests their wonderful escape. No man can doubt that the laws of Moses were once the laws of the nation,—their still existing customs prove it. No man can doubt their wonderful escape from destruction, as recorded in the Book of Esther. Their annual observance of the feast of lots, on the thirteenth day of their month Adar, proves it. In a similar manner all the great facts of their history are attested.

Now who can fail to see the wisdom of connecting a revelation with such a long series of well-established facts? The truth of the revelation is indissolubly interwoven with unbending facts. The simplest minds are interested in this relation; but with it they are informed and convinced that God hath spoken to man, and clearly revealed his holy will.

Observe still further, that the narratives contained in the Bible were written by different authors, living at different places and ages. They extend over a wide sweep, and descend down to minute particulars, and introduce even the personal biography of individuals, and a



reference to many small places. Contemporaneous with the historians, there also lived poets and prophets, who in their writings indirectly allude to this history, not as they learned it from books, but as it actually occurred before them. Now, it is surprising how closely and beautifully all these histories and careless allusions to history coincide! These writers may be subjected to an extensive and minute cross-examination, and yet they harmonize. We have in the Bible an account of the origin of nations,—the ancient nations of the earth accord with this account; we have allusions to Egypt, to Phœnicia, to Babylon, to Persia, to Arabia, to Edom, and to Greece and Rome,—all of which allusions beautifully correspond with the respective histories of these several nations: and yet there is no apparent art in this,—art would have been impossible. There are even apparent contradictions in the Bible, but only such as might have been expected where independent and truthful testimonies are given; *apparent* contradictions, which disappear upon close examination, and which never would have existed had there been any effort to harmonize with each other.

A few specimens of these apparent contradictions may here be given. In the thirteenth

chapter of Numbers it is stated that the Lord commanded Moses to send spies into Canaan; but in Deuteronomy i, 22, it is said, the people of Israel requested that spies should be sent. Is not this a contradiction? We answer: the same writer penned both those passages; and had he been careful to produce *apparent* harmony, he might have done so; but truth was his only object. The fact doubtless was that the people demanded the measure, and the Lord permitted Moses to adopt it.

Another instance is the following. In Genesis xlvii, 26, it is said that "all the souls of the house of Jacob which came into Egypt were sixty-six." But Stephen says, in the seventh chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, that they amounted to seventy-five. Here is a difference of nine. But if you examine closely, you will find that Stephen enumerates the *kindred* of Joseph, including the wives of Jacob's sons, which would have made seventy-seven; but the death of two was previously recorded, which makes the number exactly seventy-five.\*

Without specifying any more such instances,

\* There are instances, however, in the Old Testament, in which errors, especially in numbers, have undoubtedly crept into the text.

we would remark that the narrative of the Bible is strongly corroborated by the language in which it is written. The names of their animal and vegetable productions,—such as leeks and onions, vine and fig-trees, cedar and olive; the lion, the jackal, the camel, and the hippopotamus; the ostrich, the locust, and the hornet,—sufficiently indicate the location of the nation. With their successive history, too, their language changes. Their connexion with the Chaldeans, Assyrians, Persians, and Greeks, modified, successively, their language, until it was finally lost, or changed into a peculiar Greek, which never was, and never could have been, spoken by any other people.

The facts contained in the Bible, then, being established, observe how inevitably the doctrines follow.

Did God create the heavens and the earth? Did our first parents sin, and thus become depraved? Was the human family once destroyed by a deluge? How clear is it, then, that God is interested in the character of man, and that he loves righteousness and hates sin!

Did God choose Abraham to be the father of a peculiar people; and did he afterward govern that people miraculously, reveal to them his will

by his prophets, and give them abundant promises, and so frame their law and religious worship that all should point to a coming Messiah? How clear is it, then, that the demands of Christianity are binding upon us! How inevitably do all the doctrines of the Christian dispensation follow!

Allow me to enforce the thought that the history, the biography, the poetry, and the eloquence of the Bible were not given us to gratify our curiosity, to please our fancy, nor even to enlighten our minds. They are but the vehicles of more important truth: they are but the tegument, the shell; while the rich kernel, the true substance of religion conveyed by them, is far more important, and indispensably necessary to every soul's salvation. What we have been examining is but the mere temple, which is useless without the Shekinah, and the true worship of God.

We do firmly believe that no candid inquirer can carefully survey the body of evidence which has been briefly pointed out, without arriving at the conclusion that the Bible is not only wonderful, but divine; and that holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost: but at the same time we believe that many, proceeding

no further than this firm belief, may remain just as much, and even more, sinners against God. The Bible will be to them practically a nullity: they will have no interest in its truths, no share in its promises, and remain exposed to its curse. The condition of salvation is not, "Believe the Bible," for Satan and all damned spirits do that; but, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." The command is, "Repent of your sins, and renounce them."

The sick are not cured by faith in the excellence and power of a medicine, and in the knowledge and skill of a physician, but by obeying the physician and applying the remedy.

The chief excellence of the Bible is, not that without it we should be ignorant of the origin of the world, and of our own origin, and afloat upon the ocean of conjecture, and surrounded by an atmosphere of thick darkness; not that there would be no solid basis for morality, and right and wrong would be mere names without any substance; but that it reveals to us our immortality; it shows us that we are not brutes, but sinners, and may be happy immortal beings; it opens to us the doors of an eternal heaven; it discloses to us the mercies of an infinite God; it reveals the compassion of a divine, yet human

Saviour ; it opens the door of our hearts to the influence of the Holy Spirit ; it shows how suffering and imperfection may be escaped, and glorious happiness and perfect excellence may be obtained. Neglect the Bible, and you must forever remain in guilt and sorrow ; and when you close your eyes on the earth that has failed to satisfy you, you must open them in despair and unending remorse. Neglect the Bible, and you may dream of pleasure for a season, act a senseless part in a short life, with no hopes and aims worthy of our immortal being, and finally fall from unhappy time into a wretched eternity. But cherish the Bible, receive it, obey it, practise it, and Christ becomes your Saviour, God your Father, earth your stepping-stone to immortal blessedness, and heaven your eternal home. No longer a pall of darkness rests upon the world, for revelation enlightens it ; no longer life remains a mystery without object or a dream of vanity, for Heaven invests it with importance ; no longer the tomb is dreary and cheerless, for it is but the temporary resting place of the body, while the spirit is with God that gave it ; the soul is converted and happy here, dignified by communion with God, purified by spiritual power, sustained by heaven-born hope, clothed

with righteousness, and stamped with the image of the Divine One, and finally received into everlasting habitations.

We ask, then, not who will believe the Bible? who will honour the Bible? who will read the Bible? but we do ask, Who will obey it? who will even now discard and repent of the sins it condemns? who will receive and pray to the God it reveals, the Saviour it discloses? who will turn aside from the broad path which it reprobates, and enter the narrow one which it shows? who will seek first a place in the kingdom it points to, and the righteousness it recommends? O who will take the Bible as a guide, and its author as a Father and Saviour? who will bind its precepts upon their hearts, and have its principles written upon their souls? who will prefer the treasure it promises to wealth, the glory it holds up to honour, the comfort it offers to pleasure? who will seek, as a parent, first to impress a knowledge of the Bible, and obedience to it, as of prime importance, upon his child? In fine, who will show, by the general tenor of his life, and by the whole ordering of his conversation, that he regards the religion of the Bible as the "one thing needful," and alone worthy of the life-struggle of every man?

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE PROPHECIES OF MOSES.

THE prophecies of Moses, and their clear fulfilment, do undeniably demonstrate his divine commission. These prophecies are so various, so connected, and so minute, and their fulfilment is so evident, and so remote from his time, and was brought about by such a singular train of causes, that none but God could have foreseen, that every candid inquirer must bow with astonishment before Him who, through Moses, revealed his vast designs.

This is the fact to which we bespeak attention. A mere man, like one of us, who lived about three thousand years ago, foretold a long-connected train of events, and with an air of authority assuredly proclaimed that all should come to pass. History, written by successive authors down even to the present day, has most singularly and exactly delineated a full accomplishment of those predictions. Can anything be more miraculous? Could higher evidence of inspiration be imagined?



The prophecies of Moses, to which we allude, are those given by him immediately after publishing the laws of his nation. Omitting some of the less remarkable or distinguishing predictions, the prophecies are as follows, as found in the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth chapters of Deuteronomy. After promising prosperity, on certain conditions, which prosperity was always enjoyed so long as the conditions were observed, he continues:—

“It shall come to pass, if thou wilt ~~not~~ hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day: that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: and they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed forever.”

Then follows an enumeration of curses, from the forty-ninth verse to the sixty-third.

The same subject is presented in Leviticus xxvi, 33–39.

Now, to doubt respecting the accurate and complete fulfilment of this long train of prophecies, is impossible to any one conversant with the history and present condition of the people addressed. The verification of the prophecy must be acknowledged, and must be convincing, ex-

cept to those who will not believe. Let us now closely examine it.

1. It is expressly foretold that the Israelites shall suffer so conspicuously and strangely that the attention of other nations will be arrested, and men shall inquire into the origin of those sufferings, "and they shall be for a sign and a wonder, upon thy seed forever."

That this is true no man can deny. Whatever the religious tenets of any historian, or traveller, who has become acquainted with this nation, he has acknowledged that their condition is wonderful, and cannot be accounted for upon the principles of nature; and every man who acknowledges the direct agency of the Almighty in any event, recognises that agency *here*.

"Good God," exclaims Volney,\* a man, alas! who would not acknowledge the truth when looking upon Judea, over which he travelled, "from whence proceed such melancholy revolutions? For what cause is the fortune of these countries so strikingly changed? why are so many cities destroyed? why is not that ancient population reproduced and perpetuated?"

"I wandered over the country,—I traversed the provinces,—I enumerated the kingdoms of

\* Volney's Ruins, chap. ii, p. 8.

Damascus and Idumea, of Jerusalem and Samaria. 'This Syria,' said I to myself, 'now almost depopulated, then contained a hundred flourishing cities, and abounded with towns, villages, and hamlets. What has become of so many productions of the hands of man? What has become of those ages of abundance and life?'

2. The second prediction of Moses was a striking description of the nation which was to overthrow the Jewish empire, and produce this destruction. What nation was it? Every student of history can reply, It was Rome that subjugated Palestine: it was the fourth and last universal empire that dethroned her monarch, sacked her cities, and slaughtered her people.

Behold now the prophet's description of this people, many centuries before Romulus and Remus had established their asylum for banditti at Rome, which afterward became mistress of the western world: "The Lord shall bring against thee a nation from far, from the end of the earth." Rome was far from Palestine; it was a region which none of them who listened to Moses had ever visited,—a region of whose existence they were as ignorant as they were of America; a nation, adds the prophet, "as swift

as the eagle flieth." Every one is aware of the unparalleled celerity with which a Roman army moved and conquered. They marched with astonishing speed, and always surprised their enemies:—"I came,—I saw,—I conquered!" was the boastful and characteristic letter of their greatest general, after his greatest triumph. Moreover, what an aptness there is in the prophet's similitude, "as swift as the eagle flieth," when we consider that the eagle was the standard of the Roman nation, as it is now of ours,—the eagle, emblematic of swiftness and of power. But, continues the prophet, it shall be "a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand." A strange prediction that! It should be a nation of whose language they were utterly ignorant: not the Egyptian, for many of them could speak Egyptian; not Persia, nor Babylon, nor Arabia, nor in fact any nation speaking a language similar to their own. The event proves the correctness of the prediction, for no languages are more dissimilar than the Hebrew and the Latin. "A nation," too, says the prophet, "of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young." Fierceness of countenance was a well-known characteristic of the Roman soldiers; and their

merciless severity, their impartial cruelty in time of action, the unhesitating ferocity with which they slaughtered indiscriminately all who opposed them, are proverbial, and were especially exhibited in the destruction of the Jews.

Now, could Moses, as a man, have foreseen and described this nation so accurately, before as yet it had an existence, before even its founder was born, before their city had been redeemed from the primitive forest, or perhaps had even been trodden by the foot of man? And could he foresee that that nation would conquer Judea? If any man thinks so, will not that same wise man inform us what singular nation will spring up, in some remote part of the earth, one thousand years hence; and in what way, some five hundred years afterward, that singular people will become connected with us?

3. But this does not exhaust the predictions of Moses. In the third place, he describes the particulars of the siege of their cities, and the overthrow of their nation. Verses 51-56.

Now, was this terrible prediction verified? O, war has many a sad story to tell! Its history is written in blood! For the honour of man, would that it might be forgotten! May it never be repeated! But perhaps its bloodiest page is

the destruction of Jerusalem and slaughter of the Jews, by the Romans. It took place in the year of our Lord 70, fifteen hundred and twenty-one years after Moses repeated this prophecy. Titus, the Roman commander, was esteemed a mild and benevolent man; but so determined were the Jews in their opposition, they performed such prodigies of valour, they so exasperated the Roman soldiery, that even his severe discipline could not control their rage. At last he lost his own clemency, and yielded to passion; and the merciless destruction that ensued is perhaps without parallel. Children and the aged, maidens and mothers, were slaughtered and even crucified alive, with undistinguishable and demoniac barbarity.

But why should I attempt to describe what has been so well related by a Jew, who wrote an account of what he himself saw? I refer to Josephus, the famous Jewish historian. In the sixth book of his wars of the Jews, and eighth chapter, he says,—mark with what cool, historical language he relates these bloody deeds, —“So the Romans being now become masters of the walls, they placed their engines upon the towers, and made joyful acclamations for the victory they had gained, as having found the

end of this war much lighter than its beginning. But when they went, in numbers, into the lanes of the city, with their swords drawn, they slew those whom they overtook without mercy, and set fire to the houses whither the Jews were fled, and burnt every soul in them, and laid waste a great many of the rest; and when they came to the houses to plunder them, they found in them entire families of dead men, and the upper rooms full of dead corpses, that is, of such as died by the famine: they then stood in a horror at this sight, and went out without touching anything. But although they had this commiseration for such as were destroyed in that manner, yet had they not the same for those that were still alive, but they ran every one through whom they met with, and obstructed even the very lanes with their dead bodies; and made the whole city run down with blood, to such a degree, indeed, that the fire of many of the houses was quenched with these men's blood!"

Thus wrote Josephus, who himself was taken by the Romans out of a pit, into which he had jumped to save his life, at the destruction of Jotopata, a few years before Jerusalem was thus destroyed.

As if no particular feature should be wanting

in the history to verify the prophecy, Josephus relates an occurrence at which he shudders, and which he states he would not write, but that it was well known and attested. A woman, he says, of high rank, just such a one as Moses describes, actually slew her own child for food! It is probable that this—which he saw—was but one of many instances. What a verification of the fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh verses of the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy! What a destruction was that in which more than eleven hundred thousand Jews were slain within a few months; besides many thousands more that perished within a few years!

4. The fourth particular prediction of Moses, in this prophecy, now claims your attention; and this is indeed, in some respects, as remarkable as any: “And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again, with ships; and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bond-men and bond-women, and no man shall buy you.”

Now it had been foretold that their destroyers should be a strange nation from afar, and speaking a strange language. Who then, uninspired, could have anticipated that this strange, distant nation would have any commerce with Egypt? Who could have foretold that, fifteen hundred



years after his time, Egypt would be a nation, or that Egypt would hold slaves? Yet Moses does foretell it; and what is more, he specifies the mode of conveyance that would be resorted to; not by land, though the distance was short, but by ships, a method by which they could not have been conveyed when Moses spoke. He also foretells that the slave-market should at last be glutted, and no man would buy them.

Now observe the fulfilment. At the time of this war the Romans had a fleet on the Mediterranean, by which, without doubt, the captive Jews were transported, as that for them was the more expeditious way. Josephus says: "Titus grew negligent, and his soldiers grew weary of killing them, and sold the rest of the multitude, with their wives and children, at a very low price, because such as were sold were very many, and the buyers were few; and the number of those that were sold was immense."\*

Afterward he states, "As for the rest of the multitude, he [Fronto, a general under Titus] put them into bonds, and sent them to the *Egyptian mines*."† How striking this accomplishment!

5. Yet another specific prediction was uttered

\* Wars of the Jews, book vi, chap. viii, sec. 2.

† Ibid., book vi, chap. ix, sec. 2.

at this time by Moses, and this also is in itself wonderful. Their land should be smitten with barrenness. A radical change in the character of the soil of a country, or in the seasons, is a prodigy that no man could anticipate; and that it should occur not till after the nation dwelling on the spot was destroyed for their sins, is, indeed, beyond expression marvellous. But Moses says: "The generation to come of your children shall say, when they come from a far land, when they see the plagues of the land, that it is not sown, nor beareth, Wherefore hath the Lord done this?"

The ancient fertility of Palestine was remarkable. Its area was only about eleven thousand square miles, not quite one-fourth as large as the State of New-York, and yet the population, in its palmiest days, must have been more than five millions.\*

This population was immense, and alone shows that the soil must have been fertile and highly cultivated. Of this fact there is abundant evidence in the ruins of cities, and in the still existing traces of artificial and skilful cultivation. The mountains were terraced, and where it was needed soil was carried; the plains and valleys were all occupied, and the whole country divided

\* 2 Sam. xxiv, 9.

into small estates, occupied by their real owners, each of whom literally sat under his own vine and fig-tree.

Josephus describes Galilee as "full of plantations of trees of all sorts, insomuch that it invites the most slothful to take pains in its cultivation, by its fruitfulness; accordingly it is all cultivated by its inhabitants, and no part of it lies idle. Moreover the cities lie here very thick, and the very many villages that are here are everywhere so full of people, by the richness of their soil, that the very least of them contain above fifteen thousand inhabitants."\*

The whole of Palestine is described by him as equally as fertile as Galilee.

Tacitus, the Roman historian, says: "The soil [of Palestine] was fertile, and their fruits such as are common with us, besides balsam and dates."†

L. Annæus Florus gives similar testimony.

Ammianus Marcellinus, a later historian, writes that Palestine abounded in cultivated and beautiful lands, and had many noble cities, none yielding to the others, but each as it were emulous of perfection.‡

\* Wars of the Jews, book iii, chap. iii, sec. 2.

† Tacit. Hist., lib. v, cap. vi, 8.

‡ Am. Mar., lib. xiv, cap. viii, sec. 11.

And Pliny, the elder, states that Syria was very wealthy in gardens, and gives a glowing description of its various natural productions.\*

But what is the state of Palestine now? Traces of its former wealth are indeed extant, but its mountains are now, except in a few spots, bleak; its plains, uncultivated; its valleys, wild. Thorns and thistles abound, its forests and shade-trees are prostrated, and even in many places no grass or flowers can be seen, and the whole country is dry and dusty. All this has been brought about by the devastation of enemies, and by the intolerance and oppression of its present semi-barbarous inhabitants. It is proper, however, that we should state that to this picture there are some redeeming features. The land still shows its capability of improvement. Pasturage, in many places, is abundant, the palm and the grape still thrive, and the few inhabitants, not more than one-tenth of its former population, are well supplied with all the necessities of life. Still the population is even now diminishing on account of their oppression, the uncertainty of enjoying the fruit of their labour, high taxation, military conscription, and the ravages of the plague. The

\* Plin. Nat. Hist., lib. xii.

very soil, then, is a perpetual monument to attest the inspiration of Moses.

6. One specific prediction of the prophetic legislator yet remains to be considered; and though nothing could be more convincing and clear than what we have already examined, yet this challenges our notice, and triumphantly silences all opposition, and dispels all doubt; since the fulfilment is witnessed by all nations, in every part of the world, and is in itself a miraculous event:—

“And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest.”

Before we exhibit the accomplishment of this prophecy let us inquire, Could this be predicated of any other people under heaven? The Egyptian nation has been overthrown; but are the Egyptians scattered all over the world? The Carthaginians, Grecians, and even Romans have been conquered: are they, or any one of them, dispersed to the corners of the earth? The Jews, in this respect, stand alone, a solitary spectacle, for which the historian and the philosopher cannot account. While prosperous they were pro-

verbially unfaithful to their law ; but as soon as troubles came upon them they began pertinaciously to adhere to some of the external requirements of their legislator, by which their identity as a people has been preserved, and now their number is as great as when they were first uprooted from their own soil. The lapse of ages cannot soften their peculiarities or wear away their national stamp. They are exposed to *all* influences, and all are alike inoperative. Other people with a change of climate have degenerated or improved, with a change of government have been thoroughly transformed ; but climate, commerce, art, and education must beat in vain against the rocky prejudices of the Jew. And where are they ? Rather let us ask, Where are they ~~not~~ ? They are in the new world and in the old, and in every part of each. Not only are they in every country of Europe ; but visit the cheerless plains of Siberia, the Russian prison, and the descendants of Jacob are there ! Penetrate into the Chinese empire—from which you were excluded till within a few years—and you will find that, for centuries, the descendants of Jacob have been there. They have there as here their synagogues, and their congregations, and their Bible, corresponding with ~~ours~~, though

when and how they entered the region, no historian can tell. Even go to Africa; visit the borders of those regions in which it is said no European can live; pierce them as far as white men ever pierced them and returned, and you will see and hear of this self-same people around and beyond you! Wonder of wonders! who can account for it? Were they all over Europe alone, still it would be strange! Were they all over America only, still it would be strange! Were they all over Asia alone, their native continent, still it would be strange! But in Europe, Africa, Asia, and America are they dwelling; and even on many of the isles of the deep. Observe, too, there is not a people on earth that have so strong attachments to their own land, and so intense a desire to dwell in it. They ~~would~~ <sup>would</sup> ~~go~~ <sup>go</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~ward~~ <sup>ward</sup> Jerusalem, and the holy land to them is as it were the stepping-stone to paradise. More strongly bound to their religion than any other people, yet that religion is on account of their dispersion mutilated; and they have not, and as we believe never can have, till they embrace Christ, either temple, or priest, or altar, or sacrifice.

And among these nations they have "not found rest for the sole of their feet." In some

portions of the world they have *now* peace, but not in all; and till of late, perhaps preparatory to their conversion, they have found none. Their persecutions have been unceasing, intolerant. That Christians in the darker ages should have persecuted them as the crucifiers of Christ is not strange; but even the Mohammedan, and what is still more surprising the pagan, knowing nothing of their history, have given them no rest.

Actuated by the mild spirit and the sublime teachings of their Founder, whom the Jews put to death, without cause, the Christians have been the first to extend tolerance and friendship to the wandering children of Abraham; and may we not hope that soon the veil which is on their hearts will be removed, and they, "looking on Him whom they have pierced," may find forgiveness and peace, and once more return to Palestine, the joy of the whole earth, the converters of the world?

The scroll of the future was unrolled by Moses, and what most astonishes us as history was by him related as prophecy. Has any sane man a right to deny his divine inspiration? But if that be acknowledged, it can be easily shown



that a unity of design, and spirit, and origin, pervades the holy book: it must all be received as the word of God; and to bring this thought prominently out before you is the object of this book.

Perhaps no reader questions the inspiration and divinity of the Bible; but, alas! our faith is too traditional, and consequently too feeble. Too many of us believe just because our fathers did, and taught us so; and we are inclined to think that if we do as well as our fathers did, all will be right. Now this depends altogether upon two things—whether our fathers did right, and whether we have no more light than they. Go back far enough, and our ancestors were in the dark ages; and I doubt not some of them obeyed all the instruction they had, and were saved; but, thank God, we have more light. What saved them will not save us. We must come to the light, and learn as much as we can; but knowledge alone will not benefit us. It is not enough that we acknowledge the truth of the Bible—we must make it our sole dependence and guide.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## BABYLON AND NINEVEH.

THIS volume would be incomplete without a brief view of the proof of the divine origin of the Bible, in the remarkable fulfilment of prophecy, in the history of the two great cities of Babylon and Nineveh, and in the verification of the Scriptural references to these cities, by the late and wonderful explorations of their long-concealed ruins.

Babylon was an immense city, situated on both sides of the River Euphrates, the metropolis of the Babylonio-Chaldean empire. Its foundation was laid, undoubtedly, by the building of the tower of Babel. Begun thus in iniquity, its history was a perpetuation of idolatry, violence, sensuality, and vice; and finally its name became a synonyme of corruption and rebellion against God.

Many of the heathen descriptions of it are so magnificent as to be considered by some exaggerated and fabulous; and yet it is doubtful

whether all of them, properly understood, were not within the limits of truth. Herodotus states that the city was square, and the walls sixty miles in circumference, which would make each side fifteen miles long. These walls were said to be immensely thick, so that even four chariots could pass each other upon them. All traces of these outer walls have disappeared. The land enclosed by the walls was not all covered with buildings, but embraced large parks and orchards, and many cultivated gardens and farms. Its canals, palaces, temples, hanging gardens, and other works of strength and art, equalled any works of man, ancient or modern.

Among its ruins, still existing, may be mentioned the *Birs Nimroud*, believed by many to be the remnant of the Tower of Babel, afterward converted into a temple, for the worship of the idol, Baal or Bel. This—being now two hundred and thirty-five feet in height—was built of burned bricks; and many inscriptions have been found, none of which are of a more ancient date than of Nebuchadnezzar, who lived about six hundred years before Christ. It is the opinion of some that this structure was rebuilt by him.\*

\* Layard's *Dis. of Nin. and Bab.*, 2d Exp. Abridg. New-York: Putnam and Co. 1853. Page 403.

Besides the Birs Nimroud, other irregular mounds still exist, though Babylon is mostly "pools of water." These have all been explored with some care; and confused heaps of ruins, burned and unburned bricks, walls of standing masonry, jugs, and other implements have been discovered, but as yet nothing that sheds any clear light upon history, but simply confirming the traditions of its former wealth and magnificence.

Babylon, though founded shortly after the deluge, and though mentioned on Egyptian monuments as early as the exodus of the Israelites,\* seems not to have become a city of the first magnitude and power till the time of Nebuchadnezzar. He had greatly extended the boundaries of the empire, conquering Syria and Palestine, and a part of Egypt. The rich, level country between the Rivers Tigris and Euphrates was highly cultivated, the mechanical arts and commerce flourished, and Babylon was rolling in wealth. Then, when his heart was lifted up, the king exclaimed, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?"

\* Layard's Second Expedition, abridged, page 425.

It was precisely at this time that Jeremiah lived. He had witnessed the triumphs of Nebuchadnezzar: his heart had bled at the overthrow of Jerusalem and his native country. His patriotism and his religion were both severely tried; and his words seem to have been wrung from an agonized soul—every breath was a sigh, and his eyes were a fountain of tears. But even then he dared to foretell the destruction of Babylon: while he advised the ready submission of his countrymen, and for that received their hatred and contempt, and was charged with being in league with his country's foe,—bitterest ingredient in the cup of the weeping prophet,—yet he predicted the utter and eternal devastation of the then most magnificent city on the round earth: “For lo, I will raise [saith the Lord] and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations, from the north: and she shall be taken; and Chaldea shall be a spoil. Cut off the sower from Babylon, and him that handleth the sickle in the time of harvest. How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken! How is Babylon become a desolation among the nations! A drought is upon her waters, and they shall be dried up. Wild beasts of the desert, with the

wild beasts of the islands, shall dwell there, and the owls shall dwell therein: it shall no more be inhabited forever. O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness. I will make thee a burnt mountain. And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations; but thou shalt be desolate forever, saith the Lord."

How astonishing are these predictions! How exactly have they been fulfilled! When Jeremiah lived, Babylon had not shown one symptom of decay; it was in the very zenith of its glory. Like London and Paris, it was adding to its palaces, its temples, its adornments, its fortifications, its commerce, and its population annually, and was the leading city of the world, the emporium of fashion and of power.

Observe, too, these predictions of Jeremiah were no random-shots of a fanatic, no disjointed imaginings of a dreamer: at least six distinct predictions, three of which would be applicable to no other city destroyed in ancient or modern times, and two others, which no human sagacity could have anticipated.

The enemies were to come "from the north." Who could have anticipated it? How different

from the destruction of Israel predicted by Moses, which was to be brought about by a "people from a far country, whose language they could not understand!" Had Jeremiah made such a prediction of Babylon, it would have been false. It was the Medes, from the "north country," that centuries afterward began her destruction.

Her "waters were to be dried up." It is even so. Where are her canals, her artificial lakes, her fountains?

And yet "wild beasts of the *islands*" were to dwell there. It is even so. The river seems to have changed its course, and the most of ancient Babylon is an uninhabitable marsh, where "wild beasts of the desert, and wild beasts of the islands do dwell."

"I will make thee a burnt mountain." What a striking description of the lightning-blasted, fire-scathed mountain, Biris Nimroud!

"It shall no more be inhabited forever." Verily it is so. It seems beyond the power of man to redeem the artificial desert, where wild beasts unmolested dwell!

"And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations." Strange indeed! but it is even so. Had this been said of any other city, it would have been false.

Many cities have been built partially out of the ruins of Nineveh, and of Damascus, and of others that have fallen; not a palace, perhaps not a hut, out of the ruins of Babylon. Says Layard: "Scarcely a detached figure in stone, or a solitary tablet has been dug out of the vast heaps of rubbish. 'Babylon is fallen, is fallen: and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.' " \*

Isaiah had lived a hundred years before Nebuchadnezzar, and consequently long before Babylon had reached its zenith. It was yet a vigorous and youthful city, like New-York; and yet his predictions of the fall and ruin yet to come are as exact, and accurate, and wonderful as those of Jeremiah.

The reader can consult the thirteenth, fourteenth, and forty-fourth chapters of Isaiah.

The appositeness and accuracy of these predictions become more evident when we compare them with the predictions made by the Scripture prophets with reference to other cities.

There is in the seventeenth chapter of Isaiah a "burden of Damascus,"—a woe, which the prophet as a load bore, and was commanded to publish against that great city. Does the prophet

\* Layard's Second Expedition, abridged, page 420.



speak of the coming onset against it of "nations from the north?" Does he speak of "owls inhabiting it," or "jackals," or "wild beasts of the desert," or "of the islands?" Does he say that its "stones shall not be used for rebuilding other structures?" Does he say, "It shall never be inhabited?" Far from it; but simply this: The "kingdom shall be taken away from Damascus," and "it shall be a ruinous heap."

Damascus has to-day a large population; but long ago it ceased to be an independent city and centre of a kingdom; and the "ruins of Damascus" are known to all; a great part of it is one "ruinous heap." Suppose that the prophet had said of Damascus what he said of Babylon, would it not have demonstrated the falsity of prophecy? But what shall we say of these various prophecies, all different, and each accurately fulfilled?

These prophecies, too, are minute. A brilliant English writer expresses a startling fancy, that the time may come when some wandering artist may seat himself on a broken arch of London bridge, and sketch the ruins of St. Paul's; and this conceit is considered wild! and he, too, has the example before him of the destruction of other great cities previously written. But the old

Hebrew prophets, who had never heard of the destruction of a large city, and who had no human evidence that such a thing was possible, did not merely conjecture it in general terms, but mentioned cities, the largest on earth, predicted their overthrow, the manner of their overthrow, the consequences of it, and gave their reasons, and prefaced and concluded the whole with a "Thus saith Jehovah!"

Ah, Babylon, Tyre, Damascus, Edom—ye all stand on the record of the world's history perpetual pictures, stamped indelibly upon the canvass of time, monuments alike of the folly of sin, and of the vengeance and truth of God, and of the unimpeachable veracity and superhuman and inspired wisdom of the Hebrew prophets!

Nineveh has acquired new attractiveness in the eye not only of the antiquarian and bibliologist, but in all interested in the ever-increasing accumulation of evidence that "holy men of old," writers of the sacred Scriptures, "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The researches of Layard have opened a new page in what may be called the paleontology of human history.

According to Genesis x, 11, it was originally a colony of Babylon, from which it was less than

three hundred miles distant, founded by Ashur, probably about three thousand years before Christ. By many its origin is attributed to Nimrod, the "mighty hunter," in the third generation from Noah. Its magnificence was equal, perhaps superior, to that of Babylon. It was sacked and much injured as early as the time of Isaiah, by the Babylonians and Medes; but was not completely destroyed till the year 601 before Christ, under Cyaxares, a Mede, which was one hundred years after the fearful predictions of its overthrow by the Prophet Nahum.

We shall not dwell particularly upon these and other prophecies of its destruction; because, though as minute and as accurately accomplished as in the case of the other cities already described, the predictions are not as remarkable, for one reason—Nineveh was already a waning city when these prophets lived.

The chief matter of interest is the remarkable attestations lately reached to the fidelity of the *descriptions* of Nineveh, given by the prophets, and some *exact confirmations* of historical statements in the word of God.

So perfectly was Nineveh obliterated from human view that Xenophon, the Greek military commander and historian, passed over its site

four hundred years before Christ, and saw no traces of its former existence. He simply gathered the traditions of the people that this "was a deserted city, which in olden times the Medes inhabited."

There was no reliable history of it, except the incidental allusions to it in the Bible. So completely was it lost to the world that the foolish sceptics of the eighteenth century—in whom one knows not which most to deplore, their want of honesty or of common sense—actually ridiculed the Biblical statements of its grandeur and power.\*

This city, whose constant population for many generations must have been a million souls, was "devoured with fire,"† and destroyed.

At least two thousand five hundred years after

\* "The pretended empire of Assyria was not even in existence in the days of Jonah; for it is said that he prophesied under the petty Jewish king, Joash."—*Philosophy of History*, Translated from the French of M. L'Abbé Bazin, by H. W. Gandell. London. P. 58.

Again: the same sapient simpleton says, on the next page: "It is said in the Book of Jonah that there were one hundred and twenty thousand new-born infants (!); this would require a population of five millions. Now five millions of inhabitants in a city not yet built is a circumstance rather strange and uncommon." Shade of Aristotle, what logic! How can *facts* and the Bible resist such infidel battering-rams?

† Nahum iii, 15.

her destruction, her blackened and charred monuments, and some that the flames had not injured, were unearthed by the adventurous Layard, and men are permitted again to enter the lion-guarded palaces of Sennacherib, and walk the streets trod by the captive Jews. It would be impossible to condense into a few sentences the substance of these wonderful discoveries. Slabs of stone, forming parts of huge edifices, have been removed, covered with alphabetical inscriptions in an ancient cuneiform character, which have been satisfactorily deciphered, and can be read. These are mostly historical statements, chronicles of the doings of the kings; and a few striking confirmations of Scriptural history have been made.

While opening the grand palace of Kouyunjik,\* a façade, forming the grand entrance, exhibited ten colossal bulls, with six human figures, of gigantic proportions, and the length of the whole was one hundred and eighty feet. Here was found an inscription, containing one hundred and fifty-two lines, all of which has been translated. It is a description of a campaign of Sennacherib against the surrounding nations; a part of

\* Layard's Second Expedition, abridged, page 118.

which is as follows: "*Hezekiah, king of Judah, who had not submitted to my authority, forty-six of his principal cities, and fortresses and villages depending upon them, of which I took no account, I captured, and carried away their spoil.*"

"The next passage," says Layard, "is somewhat defaced; but the substance of it appears to be, that he took from Hezekiah the treasure he had collected in Jerusalem, thirty talents of gold and eight hundred talents of silver, the treasures of his palace, besides his sons and daughters, and his male and female servants or slaves, and brought them all to Nineveh."

Now turn to Second Kings xviii, 13, 14, and see the same history recorded by the Jewish historian. It is true that the money then stolen by Sennacherib is stated to be less than the robber himself makes it: but that is not the only instance in which a hero has magnified his own exploits. How strange that underneath a burned palace of an old city should have been preserved this duplicate history of the Bible statement twenty-five hundred years!

Have we any reason to doubt any statement made in the Book of Kings? But indissolubly blended with that history is the truth of that religion which the Bible inculcates.

Another parallelism, equally remarkable, is the following :—

“Solomon,” says the inscription at Nimroud, “reigned over the kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life. He had dominion over all the region on this side of the river, from Tipsah even unto the Azzah, over all the kings on this side the river.”\*

Compare with this First Kings iv, 21-24: “He reigned over all the kings from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt.” And also Second Chronicles ix, 21-24: And the kings “brought him every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, harness, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.”

Inscriptions have been found in the ruins of Nineveh, bearing the names and making some characteristic mention of Jehu, Omri, and Menahem, kings of Israel; of Hazael, Sargon, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, kings of Syria, mentioned in the Bible; of the gods Merodach, Nebo, and Dagon, the description of which corresponds with that of the Bible; of Judea, Samaria, Ash-

\* Layard's Second Expedition, page 510.

dod, the Hittites, and *forty* other places and nations, mentioned in the word of God. Who will dare to say, that it was not by the direct providence of God that these abundant and invaluable testimonials were thus entombed and preserved three thousand years, and finally allowed to be discovered at an appropriate time, just when they could be obtained by an adventurous traveller from a Christian land, and not suffered to be broken in pieces and forever destroyed? Thankful should we be that the history of the Bible is so confirmed that nothing short of insanity, or of that "incredulity" which Sir Walter Raleigh has aptly called "the wit of fools," can doubt it.



## CHAPTER XV.

SPECIFIC PREDICTIONS FULFILLED IN JESUS  
CHRIST.

A FULL presentation of the prominent evidences of Christianity would require an examination of the prophecies that relate to various nations, whose history was connected with that of the Israelites. The future desolation of Ammon, Moab, Philistia, and the complete destruction of Edom or Idumea, were foretold, and have been accomplished, and will repay careful study.

In this chapter we propose to examine the most important subject of antiquity,—the prophetic promises and descriptions of the Messiah.

From the foundation of the world the great plan of Jehovah was, in due time, to exhibit his glory in the Messiah among men; and the one prominent character in all the Bible is *Christ*.

Before presenting particular predictions, one observation is necessary. The prophecies relating to Christ are not found separate and distinct in the Bible, but mingled with other instruction.

This has excited the surprise of some ; but mature examination will show the reasonableness and necessity of this course.

The character of the Messiah was to be so astonishing, that had it been drawn out connectedly beforehand, it would not have been credited. Divine and human, God and a servant, "without beginning of days," and "born of a virgin," the establisher of a kingdom, and put to death by wicked men: these, and other seeming contradictions in his character, were too astonishing to be presented prophetically in one connected picture; and yet, by collecting all that was said of him by the ancient prophets, we find such a character foretold.

Again: it was necessary that the prophetic character of the Messiah should be somewhat veiled among the Jews, since they themselves were to be his crucifiers; they were to reject him, and as a nation they were to be rejected.

And yet the mingling of the prophecies concerning Christ with other matter did not wholly conceal them; for the ancient Jews supposed that all the scriptures, not otherwise fully explained, invariably referred to the coming of Christ. The scattering of the Messianic predictions then all along through the inspired record,

from the first promise to Adam down to the clearer statements of Malachi, is reasonable, and was demanded by the nature of the divine plan.

The ancient Jews, in taking a complete survey of what the prophets had written concerning Christ, supposed that there must be two Messiahs, for such contradictory statements could not be true of one individual; but in the person of Jesus Christ all harmonize.

We will group these predictions under proper appellations.

**THE FORERUNNER.**—In examining these predictions we find, first, a messenger, to announce Christ, promised and described. Malachi describes this prophet in the following words:—  
“Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire and like fuller’s soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that

they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." Malachi iii, 1-3.

There is also a passage in Isaiah, which was supposed to describe the forerunner of Christ: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." Isa. xl, 3.\*

These prophecies were fulfilled four hundred years after the last was given, in John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ.

John the Baptist bore all the marks of a prophet. Like Elijah, by whose name he was prophetically called, was he dressed;† like him he boldly reproved those in authority, and like him he was a bold advocate for religion in the most perilous times.

This John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, was thus promised centuries before he appeared; and when he came, so effective was his preaching, so extensive his influence, so undoubted his piety, and so evident his prophetic character, that vast multitudes listened to him, and were baptized by him; and he was finally imprisoned and martyred by the monarch, under a pretence

\* Allix states that Abenezra, a Jewish writer, who lived in the twelfth century, understood this of the forerunner of Christ.

† Compare 2 Kings i, 8, with Matthew iii, 4.

of anger at John's plain reproof of his sin, though doubtless from envy at his popularity and fear of his rivalry.\*

In all this we see a fulfilment of prophecy.

**TIME OF HIS COMING.**—The very date of the coming of the Messiah was specifically pointed out by the ancient prophets.

The remarkable prophecy of dying Jacob to his son Judah has been already explained; but this is not alone in the word of God. Haggai prophesied when the Jews were rebuilding their temple,† which had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. The second temple did not equal the former in splendour, and the aged people therefore, perceiving the contrast, wept; when Haggai uttered this prediction: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give peace." Haggai ii, 6-9.

\* Josephus's *Antiq.*, bk. xviii, ch. v, § 2.

† B. C. 520.

Now here is a definite promise that the second temple should surpass the former, and that the superiority should consist in this particular,—“the Desire of all nations,” in other words, the Messiah, should come into that temple. But that temple was utterly destroyed less than forty years after the crucifixion of Christ.\* Christ then was “the Desire of all nations.”

The prophecy of Daniel is still more minute in pointing out the time when Christ should come. This prophecy may be found in the Book of Daniel ix, 24–27.

Here the Messiah is spoken of by name, and his character is pointed out. He is to “make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.” He is to be “cut off, but not for himself,” and to “confirm the covenant with many.”

Now it is said “that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks. And after the threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off; but not for himself.” That these are weeks of years, and not of days, is evident, and acknowledged by all. Weeks of years were a

common mode of reckoning time among the Jews.\*

The final decree to restore and build Jerusalem was given by Artaxerxes to Nehemiah, in the twentieth year of his reign,† which was just four hundred and forty-four years before Christ. Daniel said that from that time to the Messiah should be sixty-nine weeks, (of years;) in other words, four hundred and eighty-three years, of three hundred and sixty days each, which would be four hundred and seventy-six real years, *the precise time when Jesus Christ was crucified.*

So clear and undeniable is this prophecy, that it is impossible for any careful reader not to understand it: indeed, it is said that many of the Jews believe that the true Messiah must have been born about this time, and has kept himself hid ever since.‡

PLACE OF HIS COMING.—But not only the time, but the very place in which the Messiah should first appear was prophetically designated: “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be Ruler

\* Leviticus xxv, 8.

† Nehemiah ii, 1.

‡ Allix's Reflections, part ii, chap. xiii.

in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Micah v, 2.

This Bethlehem Ephratah was the birthplace of David, and the place of his residence when he was poor and obscure; and it was therefore fitting that it should be selected as the birthplace of Christ, who, after the flesh, was to be the Son of David, and who, nevertheless, was to be for a time poor and obscure. The promises given to David that his throne was to be perpetual,\* all received their accomplishment in Christ,† whose kingdom is everlasting. The evangelists teach us that Jesus Christ was actually born in Bethlehem of Judah.

THE MANNER OF HIS BIRTH.—It was also expressly foretold that Christ should be "born of a virgin of the house of David." Isaiah vii, 10–17. This prophecy was not fully understood, and could not be, till its remarkable fulfilment in the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Thus also was the *first* promise literally verified: "The seed of the *woman* shall bruise the serpent's head."

Connected with this subject is the character given to Christ by the prophets. The prophets

\* Psalm cxxxii, 11–18.

† Daniel ii, 44.



did indeed describe the coming Messiah as a *man*. He was to be a prophet like Moses;\* he was not to have earthly dignity;† he was to endure trials and want, and exhibit all the elements of man.

HIS DIVINITY.—And yet, paradoxical as it may appear, the prophets described the coming Messiah as God: "His name shall be called Immanuel." Isaiah vii, 14. Christ is therefore "God with us." Again: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

To prove that this prophecy was fulfilled is perhaps impossible; but that Christ professed to fulfil it is undoubted. He "forgave sins;" he was supposed by the Jews to "make himself equal with God," and he denied not the charge; he stated that "he and the Father were one," and whoever "had seen him, had seen the Father;" and, finally, he was crucified upon the charge of blasphemy, *justly*, unless he was indeed divine.

\* Deut. xviii, 18.

† Isaiah liii; Zech. ix, 9.

**HIS COVENANT WITH MAN.**—It was also foretold that he should promulgate a new religion, or at least establish a new relation between God and man. This covenant is foretold by Isaiah xlix, 8, 9; lv, 3, 4; lxi, 8, 9: also by Jeremiah xxxi, 31–36. The prophets expressly foretold that this covenant was to be spiritual, that priesthood and sacrifices were to be done away, and that the Gentiles were to be admitted on equal terms with the children of Israel.\*

The fulfilment of these predictions is seen in the impartiality of the Gospel of Christ, which is “good news unto all men;” and extending the boon of religious hope, and joy, and eternal life to all who will receive it; and in the deeper devotion and higher spiritual insight it offers to its votaries.

**HIS DEATH.**—It was also foretold that he would be put to death. The twenty-second and sixty-ninth Psalms have ever been considered as prophetic of the trials of the Messiah. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is the most wonderful prophetic composition in the world! The prophet, seven hundred years before the Messiah

\* See Isaiah xi, 10; lx, 8–5: Zeph. ii, 11; iii, 9, 10, &c.: Malachi i, 10, 11.

came, describes him with a minuteness, and an exactness, and an energy, which are seldom equalled even in a historian; and his description every unprejudiced person must perceive could apply to but one character in the universe, namely, Jesus Christ. In this prophetic description, brief as it is, we distinctly perceive Christ; his humility and meekness; the fewness of his adherents at first, their multitude afterward; his shame, and reproach, and rejection, and violent death; his atonement or suffering for others, and his burial with the rich; his subsequent triumph, which can only be understood on the principle of his resurrection, and his everlasting glory. Indeed, in the prophecies of Isaiah may be found a complete portrayal of the character of Jesus Christ, the true Messiah. We do verily believe that it is impossible for a person candidly to read them—comparing them with the relations of the four evangelists—without astonishment, and an acknowledgment of a superhuman vision in their writer. It was these that caused Sir William Jones, that scholar perhaps never surpassed in a critical knowledge of languages, and a man also of sound judgment, to exclaim, “I, who cannot help believing the divinity of the Messiah, from the undisputed antiquity and

manifest completion of many prophecies, especially of those of Isaiah, in the only person recorded by history to whom they are applicable, am obliged of course to believe the sanctity of the venerable books to which that sacred person refers, as genuine.”\*

These prophecies have proved the sheet-anchor of the Bible to many other minds. They lie open for constant examination, and he who explores them will bid farewell to doubt.

In the ancient Scriptures we find all the particulars of Christ's death pointed out in various passages, which, from their connexions, must refer to Christ, and were so understood by the most ancient commentators among the Jews.

We have not exhausted the subject; but simply directed the attention to some of the most prominent predictions in holy writ. As the spiritual sight is strengthened, many new and, at first, occult references to Christ appear; and indeed there is nothing that more astonishes and delights the advancing and maturing Christian than to see how all the Scriptures depend upon, and exhibit, and glorify Christ. He is really the subject of every writer, the object of every type, the substance of every shadow, the

\* Asiatic Researches, vol. i, p. 225.

great Redeemer by all prefigured. The man but little acquainted is astonished when he meets with a few palpable predictions of Christ; but if, through faith in that Saviour, he becomes his follower, and learns of him, he will find, as often as he peruses the sacred record, new gleams of light, marks of prescience and adaptation, to point out the Messiah, and confirm faith in him, which he had overlooked before, and which escape the notice of all but the experienced and the careful.

We have now brought our brief survey of the Old Testament to a close, and would invite your attention to a brief recapitulation of the thoughts presented.

We first examined the Mosaic account of the creation, and pronounced it reasonable, and yet above the reach of reason; and found it amply confirmed by human investigation, so far as that investigation has extended.

The Scriptural account of the deluge is so fully attested that it requires a fool-hardy incredulity to deny it; and the common origin of man is a subject upon which the deductions of reason, researches into language, and the conclusions of natural philosophy, all coincide with

the word of God. The dispersion of tongues at Babel next claimed our attention; and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah we find written upon the very earth where they once stood, as well as preserved in the memory of men. The call of Abraham we found instructive, reasonable, and well attested, together with the account of his life, and that of his descendants, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. The remarkable authentications of their history, lately deciphered from Egyptian hieroglyphics, cannot soon be forgotten. The prophecies of dying Jacob furnish a bright picture which throws its light down through two thousand years. The mission of Moses, and the wonderful miracles of Egypt, the Mosaic law and ceremonies, and his remarkable prophecies about the Israelites, which have been gradually exhibiting their fulfilment for three thousand years, do most triumphantly attest that Moses revealed only the will of God. We then examined the commission of Moses to destroy the Canaanites, and lastly presented a brief view of the grand object of the Bible. This we pronounced to be to reveal his own character, the true condition of man, and the appointed way of salvation through Jesus Christ.

We have now shown the prophetic character of Christ: the part that remains for us is more pleasant, and, we hope, will be more profitable. The darkness which had so long been deepening, was about to be dispelled; and hereafter it will be our privilege to present the revelation of gospel day, the light which lighteneth every man.

But we cannot close our remarks upon the Old Testament without an expression of gratitude to God for such a collection of sacred writings; that ever he raised up such a long line of messengers to declare his will, and to transmit by writing to the world information that could not be spared without incalculable loss; and that the Bible was preserved through such long and tumultuous ages. Dynasties have perished, but these words, as though written on the sky, remain. The monuments of stone which they speak of have disappeared—even many of the mighty cities they describe are utterly lost; but copies of these frail parchments survive, and are printed in nearly every tongue, and distributed by thousands in all parts of the world. The Ten Commandments which Moses received, stamped upon the stone, shall yet be repeated in every tongue, and exhibited in writing to every

eye. The internal evidence of the divine origin of these holy books, the Old Testament, together with the external evidence, written upon the whole world and upon all ages, now demands the hearty thanksgiving of every worshipper of the true God.



## CHAPTER XVI.

## PERSONAL CHARACTER OF CHRIST.

AFTER the prophecies of Malachi, the last of the Hebrew prophets of the Old Testament, the Jews continued to preserve their distinct national customs and religion, and to foster their long-cherished hope of a coming Messiah. They scrupulously adhered to the letter of their law—in several instances yielding to their enemies rather than to fight on the Sabbath. Successively they paid tribute to the Persians, Egyptians, Syrians, and Romans, though for more than a century nominally independent. They were widely scattered among the nations; thus imbuing the world with their own hope of a Messiah.

In these days came a remarkable religious teacher, called John the Baptist. There were rumours among the people of some supernatural demonstrations attendant upon his birth; and showing himself in the garb of the old prophets, and being a man of unblemished character, his preaching attracted great attention. The sub-

stance of his doctrine was, that the Messiah was near at hand, that his kingdom would be of a spiritual character, and that a genuine and radical reform was necessary to prepare for his coming kingdom. The nation would not have been so aroused, had they not been prepared for excitement—they were universally expecting the Christ. Multitudes were baptized, professing their confidence in John, and their determination to be ready for the Christ. Then arose Jesus, openly and freely acknowledged to be the Messiah by John the Baptist.

We propose now to examine briefly the history of Jesus Christ, as given by the evangelists.

The history of no personage that has ever been seen among men, is better attested than that of Jesus. We have four separate lives of the Saviour, embracing descriptions of his teachings and of his death. We have references made to these books by writers who immediately followed them, and by their successors, down to the present time. We have millions of human beings—and there has been no time within a century of the date of the death of Christ when there were not thus millions of human beings—professing to trust in Jesus Christ for their salvation. We have historical monuments without

number, and we have customs and usages, especially baptism in the name of Jesus, and the so-called sacrament of the Lord's supper, which could have had their origin only in the history of Jesus, who was called the Christ.

It will aid our purpose to examine briefly the character of the four men who narrated the life of Jesus.

Matthew, from his own authority, seems to have been a tax-collector in Capernaum, till he was invited to become a personal attendant upon the Saviour. It is thought by many that he wrote originally in the Hebrew language, and that his book was subsequently translated into Greek. He evidently wrote for his own countrymen, the Jews, and from personal observation.

Mark had been an attendant upon one of the Saviour's immediate disciples, the apostle Peter; and it is supposed wrote his Gospel from the relation of Peter.

Luke was born at Antioch, and was probably a Grecian freedman, who had been emancipated from slavery, perhaps on account of some extraordinary talent; had applied himself to the study of medicine, was styled a physician, and finally spent much of his time in travelling with

the apostle Paul. Whether he was a preacher is doubtful; but he took especial pains to converse with all whom he met that had seen and heard Christ; and from their relations, and from various writings that had appeared he compiled, rather than composed, his Gospel.

John was the beloved disciple of Jesus, his faithful attendant, and adoring friend. This will account for the minuteness of his history, especially upon those parts slightly referred to, or wholly omitted by the others.

Observe now, first, the unaffected simplicity of these four writers. There is no striving for effect, no bombast, no elegantly-rounded period, no striking antithesis, no ornament nor effort to gain applause. Compare these productions with any specimens of literature, ancient or modern, and observe the striking contrast in this respect.

Observe, secondly, that these authors never praise Christ; they use no commendatory terms. You see nothing of such exclamations as these: "What wondrous wisdom did he thus display!" "How he circumvented his enemies!" "What an astonishing miracle!" "How simple and severe!" Not a word of it. They simply relate what he did and said, and what was said and done to him, and leave the facts to make their

own impression. There is not one other so simple and passionless a record in the world. We have never read the life of a good man in which the writer did not laud, sometimes extravagantly, the subject of his memoirs.

Observe, again, that these writers have left several apparent contradictions, one to another, in their narratives. We call them *apparent* contradictions, for they are not real. They arise from the omission of some circumstances, and the relation of others, as will always occur when a narrative, covering a long time, is given by independent witnesses. For instance, Matthew says, that when Jesus was crucified, the Jews had written over his head on the cross, *This is Jesus, the King of the Jews*. Mark says the writing was, *The King of the Jews*. But Luke has it still different, *This is the King of the Jews*. And John has it different from all, *Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews*.

This shows without question that the four writers made no effort to *harmonize* their different relations, for they certainly would not have overlooked so obvious a disagreement. But it does not show that either was wrong. The inscription was in three different languages, and the evangelists may have translated different inscrip-

tions, no two translating any sentence exactly alike; and the original inscription undoubtedly contained all found in the four given to us. Yet this variation does intimate that they had no collusion with each other.

Another similar instance is the following: Mark says that Jesus was crucified at the third hour in the morning, or about nine o'clock. John says it occurred at the sixth hour, that is, at twelve o'clock, at noon. How evident is the absence of all attempt to harmonize! The fact must be that the whole event of the crucifixion consumed hours. Neither one of the writers professes to be accurate in his reference to time, and it may have been the third hour when Jesus was suspended on the cross, and the sixth when he exclaimed, "It is finished!" and gave up the ghost.

Observe, too, in the fourth place, that these writers take no pains to give a favourable colouring to the matters which they relate. Whenever a disciple exhibits wrong passion, they relate it just as artlessly as though it was worthy of praise. That was a foolish dispute among the disciples, which should be the greatest. It exhibited a feeling, and betrayed an ignorance, of which afterward, but previous to the writing

of the Gospel, they must have been heartily ashamed; yet it seems never to have entered into their minds not to relate it. They had undertaken to write the life of Christ, and were bound to present all they could remember that seemed of importance. That sudden ebullition of anger that James and John manifested when they wished to call fire down from heaven to burn a poor Samaritan's house, because he would not hospitably entertain Jesus, was a similar instance.

It would not, to a casual reader, seem creditable to Jesus, that for a long time many of his relatives did not acknowledge his Messiahship, yet we find his admirer, John, explicitly stating that fact.

Again, observe what a mild and dispassionate spirit these evangelists exhibit, when describing what they evidently believe to be the most thrilling and stupendous event that ever occurred in the universe of God. The Son of God was put to death, shamefully crucified by a mob; and yet the writers exhibit no indignation. They do not even colour the narrative; the story flows artlessly on. If an intimate friend of any man, left to express his feelings without supernatural, or, at least, extraordinary control, were seized

by a mob and murdered, he would certainly express, in some suitable and violent terms, his indignation; but we look in vain for such an expression in either of the Gospels. And yet the simplicity, the artlessness, the truthfulness, the *truth* of the history of Jesus, no sane man can deny. There is no other book in the world so wonderful as either of the Gospels! Had there been but one, it were a prodigy; but four such is a miracle! God raised up the evangelists, and qualified them. He guided the pens that wrote the life of Jesus Christ.

Let us examine now the character of the great Founder of Christianity. You seek in vain in these artless, candid records for one action, or word, or thought of Jesus, that, tested by the strictest standard of morality,—even his own,—was in any degree wrong. So remarkable is the portraiture of his character that we long for more. We are compelled to exclaim, What a childhood must his have been! What a youth! A youth that was never passionate; a mechanic that laboured with others, but never yielded to evil example; a prophet, a teacher of religion, the Messiah! And this immaculate purity, too, was put to the test. He was ridiculed, persecuted, subjected to hunger, and



thirst, and poverty; but never sinned. His disciples did not comprehend him; the scribes and Pharisees purposely attacked him. He mingled with all classes; he attended weddings, funerals, feastings, and religious celebrations; he ate with publicans and sinners; he gave instruction in a most authoritative manner; he rebuked the rich and the powerful; he censured the vicious; he took himself away from a mob that wished to proclaim him a king, and again from another that wished to cast him headlong down a precipice: and under all these circumstances he never uttered one hasty word, nor committed a single erroneous action.

But not only was nothing evil found in this man, but every good trait of humanity was exhibited by him. He was industrious: his public life comprehended only three years, and of that time not a day could have been lost. He was benevolent: he soothed the afflicted; he wept with the bereaved; he comforted the disconsolate; he spoke kindly to all but the impenitent wicked, and them he exhorted to repent. He often spent whole nights in prayer, and that too when none but his disciples knew it.

He seems to have been bent on the accom-

plishment of one object—to benefit the whole family of man. Judea was not the limit of his desires. National distinctions he disregarded; he owned every man as a brother, every woman as a sister, and desired to promote the true welfare of all.

It is also a most remarkable fact that he was never mistaken. He expressed his views on a great variety of subjects,—time has not betrayed a single error. He lived in an ignorant, superstitious age, among a sordid, weak, wicked, cruel, and hypocritical people, who had overloaded and destroyed the teachings of a wiser age by puerile ceremonies and vain traditions. Jesus never partook of their spirit, but uttered, with unparalleled simplicity and point, plain, practical instruction; the wisdom of which could not have been gleaned from the whole world's philosophers, and the purity and truth of which all men, both friends and foes, acknowledge to be both faultless and sublime. Every moralist and statesman will confess that if the instructions of Jesus were truly and thoroughly obeyed by any nation, large or small, uninterrupted national prosperity would follow; and it is the belief of the profoundest investigators and political economists that universal, practical Christianity would

solve the knottiest problems of state policy, remove those inveterate evils which seem to defy all human efforts to destroy them, and render, if anything can, this earth an abode of purity and peace. Never would another gun be fired in war; never another sword or bayonet sheathed in human flesh; never another criminal executed, or even imprisoned; never another penitentiary or house of correction erected: "the lion would lie down by the side of the kid, and the little child play upon the hole of the asp."

Let us consider now the circumstances of his death. Though crucified by a mob, he was previously subjected to a kind of legal examination. He had in fact a formal trial. Now Jesus might have been liberated at that trial, had he chosen to be. Pilate, the judge, was strongly prepossessed in his favour. The word of a Roman judge, on all matters not expressly decided by statute or precedent, was law, from which there was no appeal. The soldiery was under the control of Pilate. Had he said, Jesus shall be freed, not a Jew, however furious a few moments before, would have dared to open his mouth. And Pilate wished to release the prisoner. And to add to his own inclination, Pilate's own wife

sent to him when on the judgment-seat, saying, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." Why then was Jesus condemned, or rather consigned over to the fury of a mob? It was because he himself breathed not a syllable in his own defence. He would not even reply to Pilate's inquiries; he had no wish to escape the fate of the cross.

And this, too, observe, not from a species of human hardihood—for the very night before he wept in the garden of Gethsemane, as seldom, perhaps never, man wept. That agony, whatever else it shows, and whatever other deep spiritual import it has, does certainly show that Jesus had no desire for a crucifixion. But he was not liberated, simply because he did not choose to be.

In consideration of these facts, what must we think of Christ? Had we his life alone, without the Old Testament to prepare for it, without the New Testament to explain it, it would be a mystery unfathomable, insoluble, paralleled only by what would then be the other infinite mystery,—a universe without an object, man without a religion, God without a revealer, and the sublimest human life a farce and a dream.

How absurd it is to consider any object in the universe, or any fact in history, *alone*! It is only a narrow-minded man that does it; and this practice has been the source of more extravagance, and absurdity, and controversy, and feuds, as well as cold scepticism, and arrant infidelity, than any other mental habit. There is not a fact in history which would not appear absurd, seen without its proper connexions; there is not an object in nature which would appear fit and beautiful, if seen alone. A single feature of the Apollo Belvidere would be but a lump of marble, and the self-devotion of a Leonidas would be a silly suicide.

A modern government has expended more than a million of dollars in erecting a small stone cottage, not capable of accommodating a dozen persons, on a little rocky island, almost inaccessible. How absurd it seems! But that little stone structure is a *light-house*! to bear aloft the ever-burning signal of danger, or, rather, of safety, by which thousands of lives and many millions of dollars are annually saved. The object and effect render the otherwise absurd structure sublime.

Thus should the life of Christ be studied, and thus his resurrection. And thus should the whole

Bible be studied. It is harmonious throughout, and it makes the universe harmonious, and every part becomes beautiful, when considered in its proper light.

The creation of man, the great deluge, the early judgments of God upon the human race, the singular revelations through the prophets of the Israelites, the life of Christ, his doctrines, his resurrection from the dead, the success of the Church, and its great enterprise yet to be accomplished, should all be considered together, in one perfect, harmonious picture; when it will be found that those difficulties which have exercised the ingenuity of feeble minds, filled the world with controversy, and awakened the silly ridicule of sophistical sceptics, are like the granular defects in the marble of an exquisite statue—pointed out by insect critics, utterly incapable of admiring or even grasping in one view the whole.

It shall yet be seen that the ever-moving streams of history, like the streams of earth, are controlled by one power, more inexorable than gravitation, and shall meet at last in a deep, broad sea of beauty, when the banner of Christianity shall wave over the world. Then history shall be seen to be a record of experiments a

store-house of facts, a stupendous exhibition of God's wisdom, power, justice, and love. Then it shall be universally known that Christ made the world, redeemed the world, dignified it and consecrated it by his presence and death, and has finally judged it and pronounced upon it its eternal destiny.

## CHAPTER XVII.

THE OPENNESS OF THE FACTS OF CHRISTIANITY ILLUSTRATED BY THE LIFE OF ST. PAUL.

ONE of the most remarkable facts in the early history of Christianity was the conversion of the great advocate of the faith, the apostle Paul. On one occasion, he himself defends Christianity by an argument which we wish to adduce: it is when put upon trial before Festus and Agrippa. After a pathetic reference to his early history, and to the violence of which he had been guilty against Christians, he relates in detail his own singular conversion, and then makes a home appeal to Agrippa for the truthfulness of his account. He defies all denial or controversy; for, said he, "these things were not done in a corner." Now, this is a general and very strong argument, which might be greatly elaborated; but we must content ourselves with a brief illustration of it. The point claiming our attention is the fact by which Paul knew that King Agrippa was or ought to have been convinced



of the truth of Christianity, namely, that all the history confirming its truth was "not done in a corner." The subject of the chapter may thus be stated:—The openness and publicity of the facts of Christianity prove it to be a divine work, claiming the belief and the obedience of all the world.

The Bible was not written like the Koran, by one man; it does not claim to have been concocted in secret, and intrusted to one person, assuming to relate facts that nobody saw, and presenting no evidence of divinity except the assertion of a single person, who by that assertion obtains great authority, and wealth, and power to himself; but it is a book made up of *facts*, that in the clear, open sunlight stretch over the history of more than two thousand years, written by more than a score of writers, living in different lands, under different governments, subject to different influences, using different dialects; and so far from obtaining influence and honour among men for their writings, they were hated, persecuted, imprisoned, scourged, stoned, tortured, crucified, and beheaded.

The man who would refer to the Shasters of the Brahmins, or to the Koran of Mohammed, or to the Mormon novel of Joe Smith, as a rival to

the Bible, is either a knave or a simpleton. Such stupidity deserves no forbearance, and the language characterizing it is not severe.

The Koran of Mohammed purports to have been presented complete and entire to him from heaven: the fact must be that either he wrote it, or some other *one* man wrote it, and presented it to him: it is uniform in style throughout; it contains not the statement of one contemporary fact; it has no prophecy fulfilled; it is a mere collection of metaphysical and supernatural assertions that no one ever can bring to the test in this world, garnished by perverted quotations from the Bible; and it must be received altogether upon the authority of one man, Mohammed, who *says* that it was given to him from heaven. But then, the suspicious circumstances about his testimony are, that nobody saw him receive it, that *he* is to be greatly honoured and benefitted by its reception, that he works no miracle to confirm it, and does not appear any different from other men; and still further, he promises all who receive it great sensual pleasures, both in this world and another; and that, just as soon as he gets followers enough, he puts a sword into every man's hand, makes himself a king, and says to all around: "Take your choice, the sword and

perdition, or Mohammed and all the luxury you desire on earth and in heaven."

Precisely so the Shasters of Brahminism contain no history that possibly can be tested or confirmed—mere wild imaginations of what happened millions of ages ago, on a scale entirely different from, and disconnected with, anything contemporary, or that any men now living ever saw.

Just so the Mormon novel, a book which somebody wrote in a kind of Scriptural style, Joe Smith pretends to find under a flat rock in the earth: nobody saw him find it, and if he had, could not swear that Smith had not previously put it there: it contains no history, no fact, no confirmation whatever; and silly men receive it on the testimony of one man, who by that testimony is made a rich man, a leader, and revels in the most vicious luxury and plenty. Verily it is impossible for a maniac to conceive of folly so base and unmanly as what we actually see among men. But now look at the Bible. Its very beginning is history. That very first chapter, which has puzzled geologists so much, will yet be astonishingly confirmed throughout, as it already is in parts, and will demonstrate itself to be divine. It states the unity of the human

race, a doctrine which the soundest thought and widest research compel men to believe; the deluge, which certainly is confirmed by observation and tradition; the history of Abraham and his travels; and now, after four thousand years, late researches among the monuments and inscriptions of Egypt perfectly confirm all the representations of Egyptian manners which are given. It speaks of the system of sacrifice, and sacrifices are common among all men. It gives a strange history of the Jews, stretching over a thousand years: that history is confirmed by other history, by institutions and customs now existing; and the Jews are among us, with all the traditions and peculiarities, the origin of which is here described. It speaks of the division of the human family into nations, and gives some account of their migrations and settlements; and now the profoundest ethnographical researches of students exactly confirm these accounts. It gives a short and incidental description of other nations contiguous to the Jews—Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, and others—and researches prove that they were just such people as the Bible describes: it foretells the destruction of these nations—they are destroyed! destroyed, too, in just such a manner as was predicted; and

now, after three thousand years, the old tombs and ruins of Nineveh are opened, and lo! inscriptions and written history are found precisely corroborating the Bible. It foretells the coming of the Messiah, and behold! at the time, the world is astonished; strange events do happen. A man called Jesus does appear; he acts openly; his history is written by contemporaries, the most candid, unpretending, and inartificial of men. They evidently relate just exactly what they believe they saw and heard. They tell of miracles which happened in the sight of thousands, and these the most astonishing of events; they tell of the crucifixion of their Master, of his resurrection and ascension, of the appointment of disciples, and the organization of the Church: and not one of these events was denied for hundreds of years—no such denial is on record; but, on the other hand, hundreds of confirmations. And we find all the institutions there mentioned still existing: we find Christ abrogating the ceremonial law, and we find that law neglected by his followers, though they are acquainted with its existence, and believe it was divine; we find Christ establishing baptism, and we find his followers still baptized; we find him giving wine and bread to his disciples as emblems of his cru-

cifixion, and commanding them to perpetuate the practice, and we find the practice perpetuated ; we find a history of the apostles' preaching in certain countries ; we find remnants of the effects now existing ; we find the history of the New Testament referring to contemporary history in more than a thousand instances, and though that contemporary history was the most complicated and changeful that the world ever saw, yet in no one instance did the writers make a mistake. And what is still more, we find all their teachings to be on the side of truth, and morality, and piety ; and the only reward the writers and leaders obtained from their fellow-men was reproaches, jeers, imprisonment, mobbings, scourgings, and violent death : and all this claims, and must have the belief of every candid man ; " for this thing was not done in a corner." Indeed, this one particular and noble characteristic of our holy religion challenges the admiration of the world, while, connected with the influence which Christianity has exerted, and the power it has assumed over the world, it amounts to a demonstration that it came from God. Secrecy is always suspicious ; knavery loves darkness, and invariably clothes itself in a mist. Pretenders and impostors always claim to have some

power or possession that other men cannot enjoy nor understand. Not so with Christianity. It has no peculiar prerogatives which it does not offer to all men, and all are permitted to give unbiassed and voluntary testimony. The attestations of its divinity, which were given at its establishment were given openly, often free to the inspection of thousands. How openly, for instance, did the Jews proclaim their expectation of a Messiah eighteen hundred years ago! How definitely had Daniel and other prophets written to the world that then he should come! How clearly did the elders, whom Herod appealed to for information, understand that he should be born in Bethlehem, and that from a prophecy five hundred years old, and understood all that time! How openly did Christ afterward proclaim his character and object! How public were his miracles,—such as feeding the five thousand, healing the deaf and the blind, and raising Lazarus from the dead! How boldly did the evangelists declare, on the very spot, to men and women older than themselves, that the sun was darkened when Jesus was crucified, and that he rose from the dead, and hundreds had seen him! And where is there the least intimation that anybody denied or doubted their testi-

mony? but the only effort was to get around it, to escape its force, to attribute the wonders to some other source, or obstinately to disobey its commands, because they did not relish the nature and demands of Christianity! This, we say, challenges the admiration of the world, and there is but one way of accounting for it, and that is, by acknowledging and perceiving the exact and full truth of the Christian history.

This subject admits of forcible illustration from the life of Paul. It is well known that Lord Lyttleton, an English nobleman, was converted from infidelity to Christianity by an examination of the life of Paul. He had determined to examine his life for the purpose of holding it up to ridicule, and, if possible, to show its absurdity; but, like most infidels, he was profoundly ignorant of the subject; he resolved, therefore, to examine it. But he had not proceeded in his investigations far before he saw that the life of Paul was consistent and wonderful, and must have been real, and that this cannot be acknowledged without receiving at the same time the truth of the whole scheme of Christianity. He therefore, with a manly consistency, renounced his infidelity and became a



Christian, and wrote a tract upon the Demonstration of Christianity by the life of St. Paul.

The life of Paul is a demonstration of Christianity, just, for instance, as the life of the Marquis de Lafayette, properly related, is a demonstration of the facts and nature of the American Revolution, in which he took a part. This is a feeble and imperfect illustration, far less forcible than the facts we wish to explain; yet it is an illustration, and may properly be employed. Any one reading the life of Lafayette would know that there must have been some good reason why he, a young man, should leave his own country, where his prospects were good, and, sword in hand, offer his services to a young people, three thousand miles away, and speaking another language. And any one acquainted with the subsequent life of Lafayette, his labours in the cause of constitutional freedom, his imprisonment and sufferings, would be prepared to allow that the American cause must have been just, or, at least, appeared so to him. But how imperfect is this illustration compared with the life of Paul: for Lafayette might have been stimulated by a love of glory, or by hatred to England, or by a love of adventure, while no other supposition but a profound conviction of

the truth of Christianity will explain the life of Paul.

Look at it a minute. This man Paul (originally called Saul, though we shall use the same name throughout to avoid confusion) was a native Jew, and a Pharisee, and a very strict and ardent partisan of his religion; all of which no man will deny. He openly asserts it, and others assert it of him, and no man can deny it. He was well educated in a Jewish religious school by Gamaliel; no one can deny it, and his language and writings show it. He was a persecutor of the Christians, and was actually one of the chief instigators of the death of the first Christian martyr, Stephen. The witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of Paul, while they stoned him to death. Who denies it? No one, for it was "not done in a corner;" it was in open daylight, and the whole mob saw it, and all the people knew it. Afterward he caused many to be put to death; this he himself asserts,\* and certainly he would not have asserted it if it was false, for it was no honour to him, and Agrippa was old enough to know whether it was true or not, and he tells Agrippa it was "not done in a corner."

\* Acts xxvi, 10.

Now proceed a little further. This young man, violent and haughty, and on the high road to eminence and glory among his people, all at once becomes a Christian. It was one of the most sudden and wonderful transitions of character on record. It was like a flash of lightning from a clear sky: it was like making a dead statue into a living man! There is no denying this. It certainly is a fact that the apostle Paul was a Christian. We challenge even a Voltaire to deny that! He did not advocate Christianity "in a corner." He preached all through Judea, all through Asia Minor, in Greece and in Rome. A tract of country embracing some thousands of miles and millions of human beings is rather too large to be called "a corner!" And Paul travelled over it, and preached more than a score of years, and numbered among his converts many Churches and thousands of human beings.

Now, I ask, how will you account for this? how, except upon the supposition that all that he relates of his history is true?

Perhaps an objector might say, "He did this for glory, for earthly honour, to become the acknowledged head of a new sect." A strange glory was that, indeed, which awaited the apos-

tle Paul after his change of life. To be one of a despised and persecuted sect; to be cast off by his own friends and blood relations; to commence his public career by being let down in a basket outside of the walls of a city where, before, he was a great man, and to run for his life; to deprive himself of all the comforts of a family and a home, and to live the life of a vagrant; to be whipped by a Roman scourge thrice to the very verge of death; to be thrust into prisons and chained; to be beaten and stoned till actually supposed to be dead; to "die daily," or live constantly in expectation of martyrdom; to meet with "perils by sea and by land," from "wild beasts" and wilder men, and worse than all, "false brethren," and finally to lose his head by the executioner's knife: this was indeed a strange glory, speaking after the manner of men!

But says the objector, "It was for *future* glory among men that Paul thus suffered. He knew that Christianity would triumph, and that he would in future ages be greatly honoured." Did he know this? Then he must have known that Christianity is true; for on the supposition only that Christianity is true, could he suppose that it would triumph over its foes. This position can-

not be controverted. Turn the wheels of time backward eighteen hundred years, and look upon the world as Paul saw it, and no man of ordinary or extraordinary intelligence can prognosticate that this feeble body of Christians, scattered and persecuted, on principle opposed to resorting to "carnal weapons," with the Jews on the one side and the Romans on the other, with philosophers, and mobs, and all men of office and influence leagued against them, will ever gain respectability and power, so as to make their leaders glorious, unless he believes—*what Paul did believe*—that "Christ crucified is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," and the right arm of Almighty God is stretched out for them, and against them the very gates of hell shall not prevail. This Paul did believe; but I suppose he had no reference to earthly glory—he could not condescend to give it a thought.

Again, on the foolish supposition that the apostle Paul changed his life for earthly honour, he must have been a hypocrite, a vicious man. But does it look like vice for a man to advocate virtue all his life, and to die for it? to write to his friends, "Owe no man anything, but to love one another;" "Let him that stole steal no

more;" "Let no evil communication proceed out of your mouth;" "Lie not one to another;" "Render evil to no man;" "Sin not;" "There be some who say that we do evil that good may come, whose damnation is just;" "Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God;" "Receive us: we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man." And then, when about to die, to exclaim, "I have fought a *yood* fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." Is any man so blind to virtue, in a word, so great a knave himself, as to charge the apostle Paul with knavery? For the honour of common reason, let us trust not!

How, then, can you account for this sudden change in the character of Paul, a change that did not take place "in a corner?" There is one more false supposition, and perhaps only one, and that is, "Paul was mad: he was enthusiastic, he was beside himself." This was the foolish reason assigned, in the very lifetime of Paul, by his enemies. Even in the very interview to which reference has been made, Festus roared

out, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad!" But I would be willing to leave the question to any reasonable man, Which was mad, Paul or Festus? Still, this was a common charge. Paul evidently alludes to it in one of his letters, when he writes, "If we are beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause;"\* intimating that some called him "beside himself," or crazy. This is a very common charge against truly wise men. Christians are often called enthusiastic; fanatical, absurd. Because they prefer heaven to earth, the approbation of their own consciences to temporary pleasure, the blessings of the Holy Spirit to the applause of men; because they take God at his word, and prove his promises, therefore they are called mad by men who will not believe God, and have not therefore the experience which makes a Christian happy. This allegation I shall not attempt to remove. It is useless to reason with a madman; and he must be mad who charges Paul with madness.

What, then, is the only tenable and satisfactory solution of this wonderful conversion of Paul? We answer, the solution which he him-

\* 2 Corinthians v, 13.

self gives ; and no man could better understand it than the subject of it.

The simple facts are, that he was on his way to Damascus, bent on deeds of blood. If there was not malice prepense in his heart, it was yet swelling with inquisitorial rage. Perhaps he thought he was "doing God service;" but he did not pause to reflect much on the foundation of that opinion. He had, in some way, obtained the notion that the Christians must be exterminated, and was determined it should be done. Perhaps his mind was ill at ease; perhaps he began to think, "They may be right, and I am wrong." Be that as it may, he says that at mid-day he saw a great light, and heard an articulate voice reproving him. He was the best judge of that himself. He says that as soon as the voice declared itself to be the Lord, whom he was persecuting, he fell down, blind and speechless. This is not strange: it is just what might be expected. He then saw at once the wickedness of his course: he saw that he was a murderer of the deepest dye,—he had slain the innocent children of God! He probably thought—if he could think anything in such agony—that his damnation was sure, and hell was opening for him. He was taken into a house, and there



lay three days in all the agonies of contrition and remorse, and, I suppose, not without prayer. He undoubtedly found peace, just as other men since have professed to find peace, through self-renunciation, consecration to God, and true faith in Jesus Christ. Then, and not till then, according to his own faith, were his sins forgiven. Then, by the providence of God, Ananias, a Christian disciple, and probably a preacher, was directed to visit Saul. He feared to, at first; but he went, and, at his touch, Paul was miraculously restored to sight. Three days before, had Paul seen Ananias, he would have had him thrust into jail, and have been glad to see him die: now Ananias said, "*Brother Saul;*" and undoubtedly Paul replied, "My dear brother Ananias." They were no longer foes, but brothers. In the fulness of his heart, and of his first love to Jesus, he would have been glad to embrace the meanest disciple, and fold him to his heart. Then began the noble career of the peerless apostle. Then began his trials and his triumphs, his temptations and his victories, his controversies and his exhortations, his bold attacks of sin and his encouragement of the faithful; nor did he cease till he had greeted tens of thousands of his converts, and seen hundreds of

them depart in a Christian's peace ; and, finally, amid the tears of all of the enlarged Church of Christ, he died as a martyr, and, what was far better than to live on earth, went to be with Christ. *And all this was not done in a corner.*

The conversion of Paul is not an isolated, solitary instance in the practical demonstration of the divine power of Christianity. History is full of them ; the world abounds with them. The gospel carries its demonstration with it.

In the magnificent structure of St. Paul's church in London is a small slab erected to the memory of Christopher Wren, the architect of the building, with this inscription : " If you would see his monument, look around you." Such is the language of Christianity. Would you see demonstration of its divinity, " look around you ! " See the miserable, degraded victim of intemperance and vice raised from the gutter, clothed and in his right mind, a peaceful, happy, enterprising, useful, noble man ; see human nature elevated, glorified ; see the afflicted happy ; see the dying rejoice. " These are my jewels," said the Roman woman, pointing to her children ; " Ye are my witnesses, says the prophet ; " Ye are our epistle," (our letter of recommendation,) says the apostle.

Take the history of the world, such as we have it, and obliterate from its pages all the cheering records of the power of Christianity, all its noble, philanthropic enterprises, all its instances of sacrifice, all its superhuman efforts to do good, all of its happy lives, all of its martyrdoms, all of its influence on government and law, all of its biographies of such men as Peter, and Paul, and John, and Luther, and Wesley, and Howard, and Wilberforce, and Fletcher, and Asbury, and thousands of others, scarcely lesser lights, and what a dead level of corruption, what a dismal chaos of vice and rottenness would the world present! Its deeds, its deeds declare it; by them let it stand or fall!

I appeal to you, then, ought the gospel to be to you as "a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice?" Ought you to listen to the demands of Christ, just as you listen to the murmuring of the wind in a grove, or the singing of birds on a pleasant summer's morning? If stirred by anything, ought not your hearts to be aroused to most energetic resolve and immediate action, by the gospel? The conversion of Paul is no more than is offered to all. All need it as much as he did. Without it, according to the Bible, we perish. He that is not

for Christ is against him ; he that gathereth not with him scattereth abroad. It is not a few men only that are called to be flames of fire ; every heart should burn, every soul glow with love to God.

But, whether men receive it or reject it, Christianity is of God, and will prevail. Its history is engraved on the adamantine walls of the past, and time cannot obliterate it. Its present is sunken deep into the institutions of earth, and upheld by the power of the Omnipotent. It rolls on, with more than the power of a planet, moved and guided by the unseen hand of Jehovah. It shakes off the puny advocates of infidelity as the lion shakes the dew-drop from his mane. Its children are a procession of all ages and nations, and more than four thousand years long—fall in, then, or you perish ! Already this immense multitude raise the jubilant shout, and soon the angels from heaven, and the saints on earth, together will sing, Hallelujah ! the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth !

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

## GRAND PRACTICAL BENEFITS OF THE BIBLE.

THERE are two ways of looking at every grand subject like the present—the theoretical and the practical. We may inquire, What ought to be, or must be? and we may inquire, What is? Thus, for instance, if the question is proposed, What are the advantages of a republican form of government? one man might, by patient and long reflection, *think out*, as he supposed, all the effects that could possibly attend such a system. That would be theory. Another might appeal to facts, actual republics, ancient and modern. That would be practice.

Thus we might examine the great question of the effects of the Bible. The problem theoretically would be, Given, a book presented to man by Jehovah, confirmed by miracles, verified by prophecy fulfilled, and being fulfilled, and by perfect adaptation to man, teaching him his immortality, future rewards and punishments, and the way of eternal happiness—what will be, what

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must be its effect on man? Let us suppose that the problem was submitted to an angel, who had never seen the earth, nor till then heard of man; what would be his reply? Would he not say. "In spite of the most inveterate depravity which, you say, exists in man, and for which this is a remedy, he must yield to the solicitations of that book? Self-interest will prompt him to avoid its threatenings and obtain its blessings, and the condescension of God will humble him. The Bible! Why, every man, woman, and child will possess himself of one and prize it next to his soul; they will consult it as their constant guide; every family will esteem it as a sacred treasure; all will live by its directions, and die with its promised comfort, and thank God for that immortalizing fruit of the tree of life!"

Alas! alas! all this is a mistake,—

"The best-concerted schemes of men  
Go oft astray;"

and so do their theories, and perhaps the theories of angels would fare no better. What *ought* to be, if right reason prevailed, is very different from what is. We must descend, then, from fancy to fact, from the golden clouds of the firmament to the rough and rugged surface of the earth. And yet this theoretical considera-

tion of what the Bible ought to effect, is not without profit. I have not glanced at the subject without object. I wish to intimate that great as has been the good influence of the Holy Scriptures hitherto, it has been but little compared with what it ought to have been, little compared with what it might have been, and, we trust, *will yet be*.

But let us consider the actual advantages of the word of God as ocularly demonstrated before us. Observe its effect upon the morality of man. The line between right and wrong where the Bible is not known is exceedingly movable and uncertain, and the inducements to a high order of morality are weak and ineffective.

After allowing full force to exceptions, which are only of individuals or of small peoples for a short time, certainly it will not be denied that the standard of morality in all heathen nations is far below that of Christianity. Falsehood, theft, and the violation of every law of our moral code are common among the heathen. It is true that crime and violence prevail in nominally Christian nations; but it is almost entirely among that class who either have not received Christian instruction and to whom the

Bible is as great a stranger as to the Hottentot, or it is among those who voluntarily throw off all restraint of the word of God. It is the misfortune of nominally Christian nations that they have a vast population of heathen and worse than heathen in their midst; and, therefore, to learn the influence of the Bible, no general national comparison is fair. There is not a Christian nation on the face of the round earth. There have been some states, even large ones, which at certain times have approximated the true character, and the contrast between them and others has been marked.

God has endowed all men with a faculty, the object of which is to discriminate between right and wrong; but without some guide upon which to rely, its decisions are various, and its promptings toward right are feeble; and, what is still more deplorable, but few men will listen even to that. Passion usurps the place of conscience, which becomes dormant and almost dead. Morality requires the promise of future reward and the threatening of future punishment to become commanding and strong.

A survey of heathen nations will amply confirm all I have said. With but a few partial exceptions, gross darkness covers the people,



and wickedness is universal, where the Bible is unknown. Even philosophers, who have meditated and sagely written about morality, have practised debasing vice,—

“Greatest, wisest, meanest of mankind!”

But in Christian lands there has ever been a large portion of the population who have professed to enjoy its spiritual blessings, all of whom are bound to strive, and do strive, to obey the strictest standard of morality, even a transcript of the will of God; and a still larger class who, taught in childhood the principles of rectitude, have consciences accurate and tender, and whose morals are irreproachable.

What is the consequence of all this? Not only pure morality on their part, but vice hides itself in shame. It skulks into corners and secret places; it covers itself with hypocrisy, and the general tone of morality is high and firm, in precise proportion with the influence of the word of God. Perhaps a dozen or more specimens of comparatively pure lives may be found in heathen history; but what multitudes of men and women, of the most sublime and heroic morality and piety, does Christianity present!

Observe now the influence of the Bible upon the social habits and enjoyments of man. Man is gregarious the world over; but where are social interviews productive of pure intellectual enjoyment, or conducted upon principles honourable to man, but where the oracles of God are known? Where else is domestic peace perfect? Where else is the family relation understood, and rightly appreciated? Where else is woman elevated above the condition of a servant? Brute force prevails where the Bible is unknown. The superior claims of intelligence are not recognised; and the claims of refinement and delicacy are wholly overlooked. Even in polished Greece and majestic Rome woman was a slave; and the few women who rose above the ordinary grade, and achieved a place in history, were still of a character that will not bear the inspection of a Christian gaze. These are facts that must force themselves upon the attention of all who think: and even now infidelity, though its mouth is full of great, swelling words of philanthropy, a caricature of Christianity, having

"Stolen the livery of heaven  
To serve the devil in,"

yet professes principles which, carried out, would

lead to all the immorality of heathenism, and reduce woman to barbarian degradation.

We have room only to give a rapid view of the subject, and we therefore proceed to the influence of the Bible upon the government and laws of nations. Government perhaps is one of the last places upon which the full influence of Christianity is felt; because it is only by indirect action, through public opinion, that the power of Christianity can be brought to bear upon it. The Bible does not specify any form of government as the only proper one, but contents itself with commanding magistrates to rule, and the people to obey, in the fear of God. It is only by raising the tone of morality in a people, and by diffusing correct principles of morality and religion, that the government and laws of nations can be improved by Christianity. We cannot enter at large into the subject of law modified by Christianity; but none can deny its elevating, humanizing effect. How have the terrors of war been mitigated—would to God that it had been wholly destroyed—by Christianity! No longer are prisoners mercilessly butchered, nor consigned to hopeless slavery; but generously exchanged or released: and nations, instead of their former aspect as demons,

look upon each other with some mutual forbearance and love. The rights of *habeas corpus* and trial by jury, the abolishment of imprisonment for debt, and of barbarous punishments, and of the torture even of witnesses, have been brought about by Christianity.

The laws of nations, technically speaking, or the partially unwritten regulations which nations observe in their treatment of each other, have been vastly changed by Christianity. The common law, decided by precedent, has been greatly elevated in moral tone; and no discriminating mind can read the statutes of any Christian state without detecting, on every page, the undercurrent influence of the word of God. The most of these influences act without revolution, silently, gradually, to some minds imperceptibly, but yet act. The mightiest powers of nature are silent. You may plant a garden in the shade, and subject, perhaps, to poisonous influences: the plants are all sickly and pale, the flowers are small and dull, the fruit scanty and innutritious. But remove the obstruction, the high walls,—let the sunlight upon it, and the noxious pools are dried up, the grateful plants shoot up with unwonted vigour, the blossoms multiply and enlarge, and what was formerly

sickly and drooping becomes beautiful and rich. Similar is the silent, fertilizing influence of the Bible on the nations and man. It is the light of the Sun of Righteousness, with healing on its wings. Let its light shine; let the Bible be circulated, and its preachers follow it, and its institutions arise; and the barbarous Britons, clothed in skins, led by the Druids, making huge, gigantic, hollow images, filled with human beings, set on fire from below, and thus roasting scores at once as holocausts to false gods, are, with the more ferocious worshippers of Odin, changed into intellectual Anglo-Saxon Christians: the South Sea Islanders, almost naked, and absolutely, like fishes, eating each other, become clothed and in their right mind, and watch over each other with affection; and, in decent, happy congregations, worship God: and the Hottentot and the Bushman are elevated into men! The Bible is the tree of life, and its "leaves are for *the healing of the nations.*" History, with a thousand voices, demonstrates the necessity of the oracles of God.

I pass now to consider the more important features of the subject, and especially interesting to the most genuine Christians, who have a rich

experimental spiritual experience of the religion of the Bible. The Bible is an incomparable blessing, because it teaches men whom to worship, and how to worship God. All over the round earth men do worship, men will worship, must worship something. But the worship of Brahma, the worship of idols of every description and name, is a curse, a positive curse to man. That which ought to be his greatest blessing is his greatest curse. If you could conceive it possible for all the blood, which is the life, to be drawn out of a man's body, and then another fluid to be substituted, a rank poison, which yet should have the power of keeping the heart in motion, you would expect to see a miserable, perhaps furious, insane wretch. Now the worship of God is the only true life-blood of the soul. Let it flow through unadulterated and harmonious; perfect spiritual vitality is the result: all other worship as a substitute for that is constant death, demoralizing, dehumanizing, brutalizing, yes, demonizing man; dethroning Jehovah, and enthroning the devil—the greatest insult to God, the greatest evil to man! Behold, therefore, God's indignation at idolatry! It is the concentrated essence of sin. In its worst form it is worse than atheism; it not only denies God, but

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substitutes for him what is no God, a figment of the imagination, if not the work of the hand!

Now I hazard the assertion that, but for the Bible, idolatry would be universal. Indeed, this is evident from the condition of man where the influence of the Bible is not felt.

Two important questions now suggest themselves: How does idolatry arise? and, How will the Bible prevent it? This is a subject worthy of much thought, and seldom, if ever, satisfactorily presented.

The one great subject of the Bible is Christ. Christ is its beginning, its body, its end. Christ is the subject of its first prophecy, and its last promise; Christ was prefigured in the sacrifices, foretold by the prophets, sung by the bards, expected by all the saints, manifested in due time in Judea, offered up for us all, raised from the dead, and has ascended on high, where he ever liveth, at the right hand of God, making intercession for us. Take Christ from the Bible, and there is but a little remnant of useless ruins left. Christ is the great want, too, of man. A knowledge of Christ is necessary to our happiness and perfection. But what is Christ? A Mediator, an Intercessor, a Daysman between God and us.

Now, inasmuch as such a Mediator is neces-

sary, and without him none could be saved, and inasmuch as every man is created for Christ, God has implanted in every human soul an instinctive *want of a Redeemer*. All men, perhaps unconsciously, when they worship, *sigh for a Redeemer*. There is an instinctive fear of worshipping Jehovah without a Redeemer. There is an inclination to suppose that the Almighty will not listen to us unless we have some one to plead our cause. Therefore, where Christ is unknown, men in their worship seek *other mediators*. Observe, then, the tendency to idolatry. Idolaters have generally believed in the existence of God, a Supreme Being; but they have been disinclined to worship him. They have sought out demi-gods or eminent deceased human beings, and prayed to them. These have been the false gods of the idolaters. These have been substituted for Christ. These have been counterfeit Christs—*false redeemers*.

See how this view is confirmed by a reference to Roman Catholic nations. They neglect the Bible; the people are totally ignorant of it; in Rome, the residence of the pope, a Bible cannot be found in any bookstore, and even the great body of the priests are ignorant of it. Therefore with them Christ, the true Mediator,



is in fact deposed, and *idols* take his place. A hundred prayers are offered to the Virgin Mary where one is offered to God or Christ. She was a *woman*—her pictures are presented in every public place; they are not afraid to present their wants to her; and though not one instance of her worship is mentioned in the Bible, she has become their tutelar goddess. Besides this, prayers are offered to hundreds of saints, who together take the exact place occupied by false gods among the idolaters.

Now, this want of the soul, this desire for a mediator, *is met* in the Bible, by the presentation of Jesus Christ. "We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Christ was careful, therefore, to instruct his disciples to offer their prayers "in his name." He assures us that where two or three are gathered together, *he* is in the midst. He is the only perfect Mediator—God and man; omniscient, and yet sympathizing with us; omnipotent, and yet ready to stoop to aid the humblest in the most trifling want; perfectly holy, and yet has been tempted; perfectly exalted, and yet has been humbled, and has even suffered and died for man! The great want of

the soul is a Mediator; and the great object of the Bible is to produce a universal worship of God in Christ.

It is for this reason that the great object of the apostles was to produce faith in Christ. A belief in the Messiahship, or, what is the same thing, in the divine mediatorial character of Christ, is the first condition of salvation to all who hear the gospel. Believe in me, and work righteousness, was the substance of all of Christ's preaching. Repent and believe in Christ, is the condensation of every apostolic discourse.

It is not necessary to detail what must be the consequences of this faith. Men unconsciously imitate whom they worship. But Christ was the fulness of the Godhead bodily. He was devout and pure, affectionate and holy, and indignant at sin. None can read the Scriptures and be ignorant of the only perfect character ever seen or portrayed; and no one can rashly presume to obtain the favourable regard of such a Being, without an earnest effort to abandon sin and obey the demands of the moral law. The slightest flaw in the character of Christ would undermine and destroy the Bible: but there is no such flaw; and the tendency of the worship of Christ is to produce a perfect world.

Besides all this, we must not overlook the chief element of the power of the Bible, the efficacy of the Holy Ghost promised to all who believe in Christ, and who strive to obey him. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart." The Holy Spirit is the author of the Bible; he shines through it, and blesses those who study and obey it; and that in no common or ordinary sense, but actually transforms the nature, regenerates the heart, and prepares for a holy heaven.

It follows from this that the chief advantages of the Bible are of an internal character, invisible to the outward eye, inappreciable by the "natural man." The signs of health may be a brightness of the eye, a freshness of the complexion, an elasticity of tread, and an activity of the body; but health itself is something more and deeper than these signs—it is the harmonious performance of all the functions of all the organs of vitality, giving rise to buoyancy of feelings and fulness of life. So the outward influence of the Bible is purity of morals, improvement of society, rectification of civil law, and a promotion of the worship of God in Christ; but

its full effect is internal and spiritual. "The kingdom of God is within." It is a peace unseen, but not unfelt; it is a joy indescribable, but glorious; it is consolation in affliction, support in trials, forgiveness to the sinner, sanctification to the polluted, happiness in death, and a passport to heaven. This, the chief advantage of the Bible, I cannot describe. I can only point to it, and say to the curious, Come, and see! A pencil dipped in the colours of a sunset sky could not depict it—it must be felt to be known.

But witnesses of this sublime fact are not wanting. Go to that Christian widow, who, like the widow of Nain, has lost her only earthly hope and support, and ask what it is that so strangely sustains her, and causes her heart to smile, even through her tears; and she will tell you, The religion of the Bible, the promises and the Saviour of the Bible. Go to that dying saint, and ask him what gives him his unearthly hope, and sublime trust and joy; and he will say, The religion of the Bible. There are millions now on earth who would sooner sacrifice all their wealth—yea, some of them have no wealth but that, and feel richer than though they had all the world besides—they would surrender all their earthly comfort, and their lives even, rather

than yield what they have gained from the Bible! This is my own position, and, if you are Christians, this is yours.

Which one of us cannot say, I would sooner die the most painful, ignominious death imaginable, than yield what I gain from the Bible? To one who has felt the saving power of its spirit, and learned to trust in its promises, to give up the Bible would be like giving up his only protection on the wide ocean; it would be like blotting out the sun from the heavens, and leave the earth rayless and cheerless—a desolate globe in a firmament of night! Nor are we alone in this feeling. Millions have died in the same sentiment, and with their last breath uttered the same testimony—take what you will besides, but leave us the Saviour of which we read in the oracles of God.

Upon this subject it is impossible to be extravagant. Men often become violent in their feelings, hyperbolical in their language, upon many of the petty interests of earth; but human vocabularies do not furnish terms strong enough, and the human heart is not capable of emotion adequate to describe or estimate the worth of the word of God. It is God's greatest gift, without which all other gifts would be nothing—it is the

concentration of the wisdom and mercy of Jehovah.

There is another thought worthy of attention. There are many advantages growing out of the fact that the oracles of God are given in the form of a book. "*Write the vision,*" said God to the prophet. Some believe in a traditional revelation, originally given to man, who transmitted it orally to the next generation, and they to others. The Jews believed in such a revelation in addition to their sacred books; and what was the consequence? Even in the time of Christ this pretended revelation was in collision with the true one; and Christ truly said, "Ye make void the law of God by your vain traditions." We see the same thing in the present Popish Church. They believe in a revelation orally transmitted: and how absurd and impious are the dogmas of man, palmed off upon the credulity of others as the revelations of God! Who does not see that even if a revelation was given to man, and not committed to paper, it would be transformed, corrupted, and coloured by the impure mediums through which it would pass? Wine would not be expected to retain its purity after passing through a thousand unwashed bottles; and who would believe in a

revelation conveyed by some of the greatest monsters that ever trod the earth, who were exposed also to the strongest temptations of avarice and ambition to substitute their own insane cravings for the will of God?

But God's revelation is a book. Some have even believed that God invented alphabetical writing for this express purpose; and that never were letters employed till Moses received the ten commandments at Sinai. Be this as it may, we know that in the early ages God employed letters as a vehicle of his instruction to man. Multiplied copies, carefully studied, cannot be corrupted or changed. The best of men, when excited, colour and change the truth through their own intensity of feeling; but the printed page is passionless and true. The page that records the crucifixion of Christ is no more excited than the one which relates his genealogy. Copies too may be multiplied, and men know when they receive it that they have the accurate word of God.

Behold, then, an instance of the divine wisdom beaming from all the works of Providence, that his revelation should have been in the form of a series of books. Not only is the revelation itself stamped with permanence more unyield-

ing than the Pyramids of Egypt, but the wonderful steam-press, which prints its thousands in an hour, is converted into a splendid assistant missionary, to aid in spreading the truth to the ends of the earth. Will it ever be thus widely known? Will it ever be the guide of the world, the great controller of man? History shall yet solve the problem. That it may govern our own hearts and conduct, and, as speedily as possible, all mankind, should be our prayer and labour.



THE END.











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